

# School Nurse Toolkit



# Introduction

This toolkit has been produced with support from Public Health England and is designed to help school nurses improve the health literacy of children and young people.

The tools include simple and cost effective methods to improve young people's health literacy. But the toolkit also offers in-depth approaches to enable the school nursing team to influence commissioning priorities of both local authorities and schools and to support improved health literacy for young people across the wider community.

The toolkit has been developed as a result of an earlier piece of work carried out for the Department of Health, working with school nurses in Shropshire, West London and North Tyneside. The content of this toolkit has been produced with help from them and additional school nursing teams in the Southern region and Hertfordshire. All the ideas and resources have been checked with school nurses. They provide a toolkit of options to improve young people's health literacy in a range of different local contexts.

## **Evidence statement**

This toolkit presents a range of resources, from academic publications to examples of interesting practice that might stimulate thinking. It does not represent a systematic review of the resources available, and inclusion in the report does not mean that the resources have any kind of official endorsement from the Association for Young People's Health or Public Health England. The intention is to draw as widely as we can on interesting ways forward. Many of these will require further trial and evaluation to confirm their effectiveness.

# Health Literacy

## What is health literacy?

The World Health Organization (1998) defined health literacy as: 'The motivation and ability of individuals to gain access to, understand and use information in ways which promote and maintain good health'.

The 'ultimate goal' of health literacy is 'to promote greater independence and empowerment' rather than simply to convey information. (Prof Don Nutbeam, 2000).

He suggested health literacy could fall into three categories.

<b>Level 1</b>	Basic/functional literacy – learning to read and decode health information
<b>Level 2</b>	Developing knowledge, skills and understanding of health and the ability to make judgements and seek appropriate help
<b>Level 3</b>	Critical health literacy – a broader level of understanding that includes becoming active members of society and addressing determinants of health (not just focusing on their own individual needs)

*(Nutbeam's (2000) three-level hierarchy of health literacy)*

## Why is health literacy important for young people?

Health literacy has a vital role for young people who are at a life stage where they are increasing their independence and becoming less reliant on parents and carers. Helping them to build knowledge and skills about their health and wellbeing provides them with skills for life. Health literacy also empowers them to make decisions about their own health and to access and use health services appropriately.

One study, looking at the impact of school nurse interventions in behaviour change and mental health (Turner & Mackay, 2015) found that school nurses were viewed as 'unique professionals with effective communication and interpersonal skills'. Their interventions had led to positive behaviour change including reduced anxiety and stress and increased access and engagement with services.



# School Nurses

## 1 The value of promoting health literacy

### 1.1 *Increasing awareness of the school nurse team*

Focus groups carried out by the Association for Young People's Health in three schools around the country showed young people valued their school nurse but felt there could be more promotion of the school nurse role, the services they offered and the times they were available.

Supporting health literacy can help to promote the role of the school nurse team as a first step to helping pupils improve their health literacy.

### 1.2 *Highlighting new and innovative ways of accessing health services*

New and innovative approaches to delivering health literacy are emerging, including online help and apps. These can help school nurses ensure universal support is available to young people in and out of school, as well as targeted services.



### 1.3 *Promoting confidentiality*

Young people tell us that fear of lack of confidentiality is their main barrier to seeking advice and help for health problems.

In a school environment there are two tiers of confidentiality which can be confusing for pupils. Teachers do have to share information, but school nurses are not bound by the same rules and do not need to disclose facts unless the pupil is at serious risk of harm.

Health literacy approaches can help to highlight the fact that school nurses offer a confidential service and make sure pupils understand their right to confidentiality in and out of school.

School nurses might want to work towards the ***You're Welcome Quality Standards for Youth Health Services*** to extend the quality and reach of existing school or community based services, or work towards goals in local or regional healthy schools initiatives.

#### 1.4 *Providing young people and their families with information about the range of places to get health advice and help*

Young people often aren't aware of the range of places they can get health advice and help. School nurses can highlight the options, including their own school nurse service. These could even be listed in a pupil planner or diary.

- Pastoral options in school – counselling, peer support, school nurse
- Virtual school nurse ([see ChatHealth – Case study B](#))
- Pharmacists for minor ailments, emergency hormonal contraception, help with medication for longterm conditions
- GPs for physical and mental health concerns (make sure pupils know who their GP is or provide advice to help them register with a GP)
- Young people's sexual health services
- Other local NHS or local authority health services
- Voluntary sector options – eg Youth Information Advice and Counselling Services ([www.youthaccess.org.uk](http://www.youthaccess.org.uk))
- NHS 111 non-emergency number
- NHS walk-in centres for minor injuries
- A&E for trauma and more serious health incidents



In 2014-15 1.9 million 10-18 year olds went to a hospital accident and emergency department (A&E). This age group is not the biggest user of A&E and most visits are related to injury (accounting for 72% of visits among 13-17 year olds), but secondary school pupils often aren't aware of the range of places they can get health advice and help.

*(Accident and Emergency Attendances in England – 2014-15  
Health and Social Care Information Centre)*

#### 1.5 *Reducing health inequalities*

School nurses already contribute to the wider public health agenda of reducing health inequalities and reaching out to vulnerable and marginalised young people who may otherwise 'fall through the gaps' of health provision. ([www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk/reaching-marginalised-young-people](http://www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk/reaching-marginalised-young-people))

# School Nurses

## 2 How can school nurses support health literacy?

There are many different ways of promoting health literacy in a secondary school and/or community setting, depending on capacity, size of the school nursing team and budget.

Additional nurse time can be commissioned by schools or multi-academy trusts to provide more health literacy opportunities for pupils or the wider school community.

### 2.1 Places to promote the school nurse and deliver health literacy

- school website
- school e-learning platform
- digital badges  
eg [www.makewav.es/story/975563/title/knowingmyschoolnurse](http://www.makewav.es/story/975563/title/knowingmyschoolnurse)
- pupils' school planners/diaries
- posters around school
- introduction at transition days for incoming Year 7 pupils
- sixth form inductions/transition days
- flyers at school open days for prospective pupils
- information in assemblies or tutor time
- GP surgeries/health centres
- Local voluntary sector organisations

### 2.2 Supporting health literacy across a wider area

School nurses often have responsibility for a number of schools and can't deliver face-to-face advice to all young people individually. It is important for school nurses to find ways to reach out across all the schools and community settings in their area. School nurses also have a vital role in signposting young people to other sources of advice for their physical or mental health.

**Clear and simple ways for young people to interact with the school nurse service:**

- Have a text service with the number available to all children and young people
- Run a survey or questionnaire for pupils on health concerns then deliver health literacy initiatives to address arising needs.

### **Where to signpost to other sources of help?**

(See [CIC App – Case study C](#))

School nurses have a role in promoting apps, social media and trusted websites such as those below. It is important to encourage young people think about the quality of the health information they get online and remember that some sites may be blocked on school premises if they include words such as 'sex' or 'drugs'.

- NHS Choices [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)
- NHS Go [www.NHSGo.uk](http://www.NHSGo.uk) An App for young people linked to NHS Choices
- Advice for under-25s [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

- Mental health [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)
- Drugs [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)
- Sexual health [www.brook.org.uk](http://www.brook.org.uk)
- Eating disorders [www.b-eat.co.uk](http://www.b-eat.co.uk)
- Websites for local voluntary sector services or local authority/NHS services

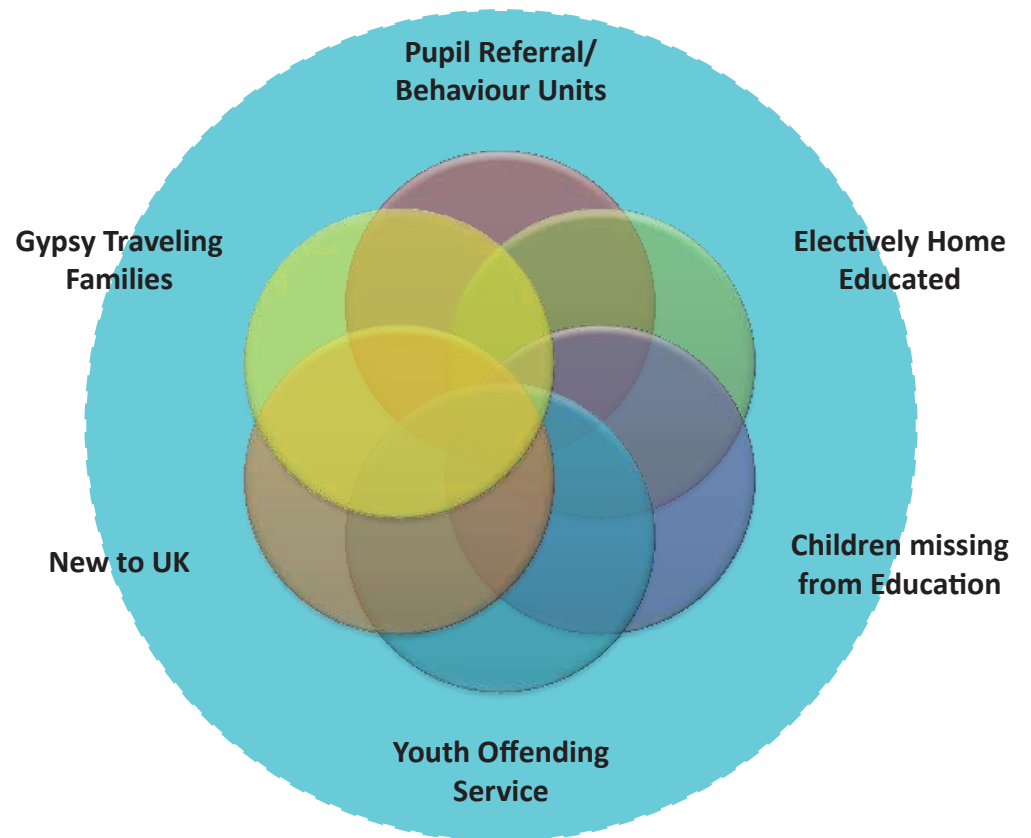
### 2.3 Informing local priorities and funding for young people's health

School nurses are in a unique position as they hold knowledge about the health and wellbeing of the population of young people in their area. They are also in touch with public health trends including under-18 conceptions, smoking prevalence and substance use.

This insight and frontline experience can contribute to the following:

- **Design of public health initiatives:** Getting health content for young people into public health initiatives across the local authority
- **Data collection:** Gathering data from school nurse one-to-one consultations, or the number and type of referrals that have been made
- **Informing commissioning:** Data can be provided by school nurses to inform local commissioning and Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs).

### 2.4 How school nurses reach all young people in their area



Infographic Source:  
Heidi Ferrier-Hixon

# School Nurses

## 3 How can school nurses support an extended approach to health and wellbeing across the wider community?

School nurse teams have the expertise to support health literacy approaches across the whole school and wider community settings, reaching out to all young people in the area. School nurses are knowledgeable about the health needs in their local population and can share and deliver resources through pathways in the school.

### 3.1 Simple tips for school nurses to influence the whole school

- **Profile:** Put school nurses' names on the website, school staff lists, and get their photos up alongside staff around the school building
- **Parent/carer evenings:** Have information about the school nurse service and health resources available at parent consultations, school open days or information events to reach the wider school community, or host specific parent/carer forums on health.
- **Meetings:** Make sure the school nurse team or a representative from the provider have regular meetings with the headteacher or the lead in the school/multi-academy trust about current need, services and health protection.
- **PSHE:** Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) should be seen as an important opportunity to get health literacy messages and information to specific age groups.
- **School assemblies:** Provide an opportunity to reach a wide audience with health literacy information.

- **Immunisation sessions** (eg HPV or flu) can be an opportunity to deliver health literacy messages
- **'Well man' or 'well woman'** lessons or activities give school nurses the opportunity to deliver themed, age-appropriate health literacy advice

### 3.2 Link with wider community to provide support in and out of schools and reach young people not in mainstream education

- **Peer support programmes:** School nurses can help to develop and support positive peer support programmes, anti-bullying initiatives and boost resilience
- **Local health days:** Getting involved in 'themed' health days across a local area or international awareness days, eg World Mental Health Day can reach a wide audience

*'We attend large public health events with partner agencies. This is a great opportunity to raise school nursing profile at the key transition stage but also to deliver key public health messages.'*

*School nurse team leader, Shropshire*



# Case Study A

## Identifying harmful sexual behaviours

An effective approach to supporting young people's confidentiality needs to be balanced with safeguarding especially if school nurses are providing sexual health advice or services.

Tools such as Brook's Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool are helpful for health professionals, including school nurses, to work out whether sexual behaviour is normal or a cause for concern.



[www.brook.org.uk/our-work/category/sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool](http://www.brook.org.uk/our-work/category/sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool)

Additional resources can be found on pages 12–14.

SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS ●●● TRAFFIC LIGHT TOOL		
What is green behaviour?	What is amber behaviour?	What is red behaviour?
<p>Green behaviours reflect safe and healthy sexual development.</p> <p><b>They are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• displayed between children or young people of similar age or developmental ability</li><li>• reflective of natural curiosity, experimentation, consensual activities and positive choices</li></ul>	<p>Amber behaviours have the potential to be outside of safe and healthy behaviour.</p> <p><b>They may be:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• unusual for that particular child or young person</li><li>• of potential concern due to age, or developmental differences</li><li>• of potential concern due to activity type, frequency, duration or context in which they occur</li></ul>	<p>Red behaviours are outside of safe and healthy behaviour.</p> <p><b>They may be:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• excessive, secretive, compulsive, coercive, degrading or threatening</li><li>• involving significant age, developmental, or power differences</li><li>• of concern due to the activity type, frequency, duration or the context in which they occur</li></ul>

# Case Study B

## ChatHealth – the virtual school nurse, Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust

Leicestershire’s ‘virtual school nurse’ won the NHS Innovation Challenge Prize in 2015 and 50 NHS Trusts expressed an interest in buying a licence to use it in their areas.

Many school nurses are using ChatHealth to provide a secure, confidential messaging service for their pupils.

ChatHealth says the benefits for young people are:

- Improved choice for young people on when and how to access confidential, non personal help and advice.
- Overcomes stigma – half of all contacts begin anonymously.
- Breaks down social barriers – doubles the uptake of the service amongst male users compared to face-to-face clinics.

To find out more about the service here’s a short video.

<https://youtu.be/wWqbBL3L9OA>



Additional resources can be found on pages 12–14.

# Case Study C

## Health Information Apps

Children in care worked with the Southern Health Children in Care (CIC) team to design and develop an app to keep their health information in one secure place. The app enables children in care to record health information about themselves, along with their immunisation history, birth history, appointments etc. Although it was designed by children in care it could be used by any young person.



<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.southernhealth.cicmobile>



Additional resources can be found on pages 12–14.

# Resources for Professionals

## Health in schools

Promoting health literacy in secondary schools: A Review. Hagell A, Rigby E and Perrow F (2015) British Journal of School Nursing Vol 10, No.2 [www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Promoting-health-literacy-in-secondary-schools.pdf](http://www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Promoting-health-literacy-in-secondary-schools.pdf)

Promoting health literacy in secondary schools: implications for school nurses. Presentation to School Nurse International Conference Ann Hagell and Frances Perrow Association for Young People's Health, 2015 [www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk/conference-presentations](http://www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk/conference-presentations)

## Safeguarding and CSE

Safeguarding children and young people: enhancing professional practice – working with children and families. Department for Education, Department of Health [http://media.dh.gov.uk/network/387/files/2012/11/SAFEGUARDING\\_ENHANCING-PROFESSIONAL-GUIDANCE.pdf](http://media.dh.gov.uk/network/387/files/2012/11/SAFEGUARDING_ENHANCING-PROFESSIONAL-GUIDANCE.pdf)

Female Genital Mutilation – An RCN resource for nursing and midwifery practice (Third edition). Royal College of Nursing [www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/publications/pub-005447](http://www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/publications/pub-005447)

Helping school nurses to tackle child sexual exploitation. Public Health England, Department of Health [www.gov.uk/government/publications/helping-school-nurses-to-tackle-child-sexual-exploitation](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/helping-school-nurses-to-tackle-child-sexual-exploitation)

Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool. Brook [www.brook.org.uk/our-work/category/sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool](http://www.brook.org.uk/our-work/category/sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool)

Working together to safeguard children. Department for Education, 2015 [www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2)

## Military families

The role of health visitors and school nurses: Supporting the health and wellbeing of military families Public Health England, Department of Health, 2015 [www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-the-health-and-wellbeing-of-military-families](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-the-health-and-wellbeing-of-military-families)

## Youth justice

Supporting Children, Young People and Families and Communities to be Safer, Healthier and to Reduce Youth Crime. Department for Education, Youth Justice Board, Department of Health <http://media.dh.gov.uk/network/387/files/2012/11/Youth-Justice-pathway.pdf>

## Confidentiality

A child's legal rights Gillick competency and Fraser guidelines. NSPCC  
[www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/legal-definition-child-rights-law/gillick-competency-fraser-guidelines](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/legal-definition-child-rights-law/gillick-competency-fraser-guidelines)

0-18 years: guidance for all doctors. General Medical Council  
[www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical\\_guidance/children\\_guidance\\_index.asp](http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical_guidance/children_guidance_index.asp)

Under-16s: consent and confidentiality in sexual health services. FPA  
[www.fpa.org.uk/factsheets/under-16s-consent-confidentiality](http://www.fpa.org.uk/factsheets/under-16s-consent-confidentiality)

Confidentiality: Promoting young people's sexual health and well-being in secondary schools. Sex Education Forum  
[www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/media/6348/sef\\_ff\\_38.pdf](http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/media/6348/sef_ff_38.pdf)

Confidentiality and Young Person's Toolkit. Royal College of General Practitioners 2016  
[www.rcgp.org.uk/bookshop/eresources/free-eresources/confidentiality-and-young-persons-toolkit.aspx](http://www.rcgp.org.uk/bookshop/eresources/free-eresources/confidentiality-and-young-persons-toolkit.aspx)

## Data

Key Data on Adolescence 2015 Association for Young People's Health 2015  
[www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk/key-data-on-adolescence](http://www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk/key-data-on-adolescence)

Accident and Emergency Attendances in England – 2014-15. Health and Social Care Information Centre  
<http://content.digital.nhs.uk/article/2021/Website-Search?productid=20143&q=Accident+and+Emergency+Attendance+s+in+England+2014-15&sort=Relevance&size=10&page=1&area=both#top>

Child Health Profiles. Public Health England  
[www.gov.uk/government/statistics/2016-child-health-profiles](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/2016-child-health-profiles)

HBSC England National Report: Findings from the 2014 HBSC study for England. Brooks F, Magnusson J, Klemmera E, Chester K, Spencer N, & Smeeton N. (2015). Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire  
[www.hbscengland.com/reports/](http://www.hbscengland.com/reports/)

Infographic on vulnerable young people. Association for Young People's Health 2016 (supported by NHS England)  
[www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk/reaching-marginalised-young-people](http://www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk/reaching-marginalised-young-people)

## Toolkits

GP Champions Project Toolkit. Association for Young People's Health 2015  
[www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/GPToolkit\\_ONLINE.pdf](http://www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/GPToolkit_ONLINE.pdf)

Asthma Toolkit 2016. NHS London  
[www.myhealth.london.nhs.uk/healthy-london/children-and-young-people/asthma-toolkit/schools](http://www.myhealth.london.nhs.uk/healthy-london/children-and-young-people/asthma-toolkit/schools)

NHS Children and young people diabetes – A London guide for teachers and parents of children and young people with diabetes: pre-school, early years, primary and secondary schools Healthy London Partnership, Diabetes UK and South East Coast and London Diabetes Partnership Board 2015  
[https://www.myhealth.london.nhs.uk/system/files/Health%20London%20Partnership%20CYP%20diabetes%20guide\\_1.pdf](https://www.myhealth.london.nhs.uk/system/files/Health%20London%20Partnership%20CYP%20diabetes%20guide_1.pdf)

# Resources for Professionals

## Peer support, resilience and anti-bullying

A guide for young people supporting each other

[www.behealthy-peersupport.org.uk/](http://www.behealthy-peersupport.org.uk/)

A public health approach to promoting young people's resilience (March 2016)

[www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/resilience-resource-15-march-version.pdf](http://www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/resilience-resource-15-march-version.pdf)

Anti Bullying Alliance [www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)

## School nurse social media, apps and digital badges

Children in Care health app. Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.southernhealth.cicmobile>

ChatHealth

[www.leicspart.nhs.uk/Library/ChatHealthSchoolStaffBriefingMarch2014.pdf](http://www.leicspart.nhs.uk/Library/ChatHealthSchoolStaffBriefingMarch2014.pdf)  
<https://youtu.be/wWqbBL3L9OA>

Know your school nurse digital badge (age 11-16+)

[www.makewav.es/badge/2077](http://www.makewav.es/badge/2077)

## References

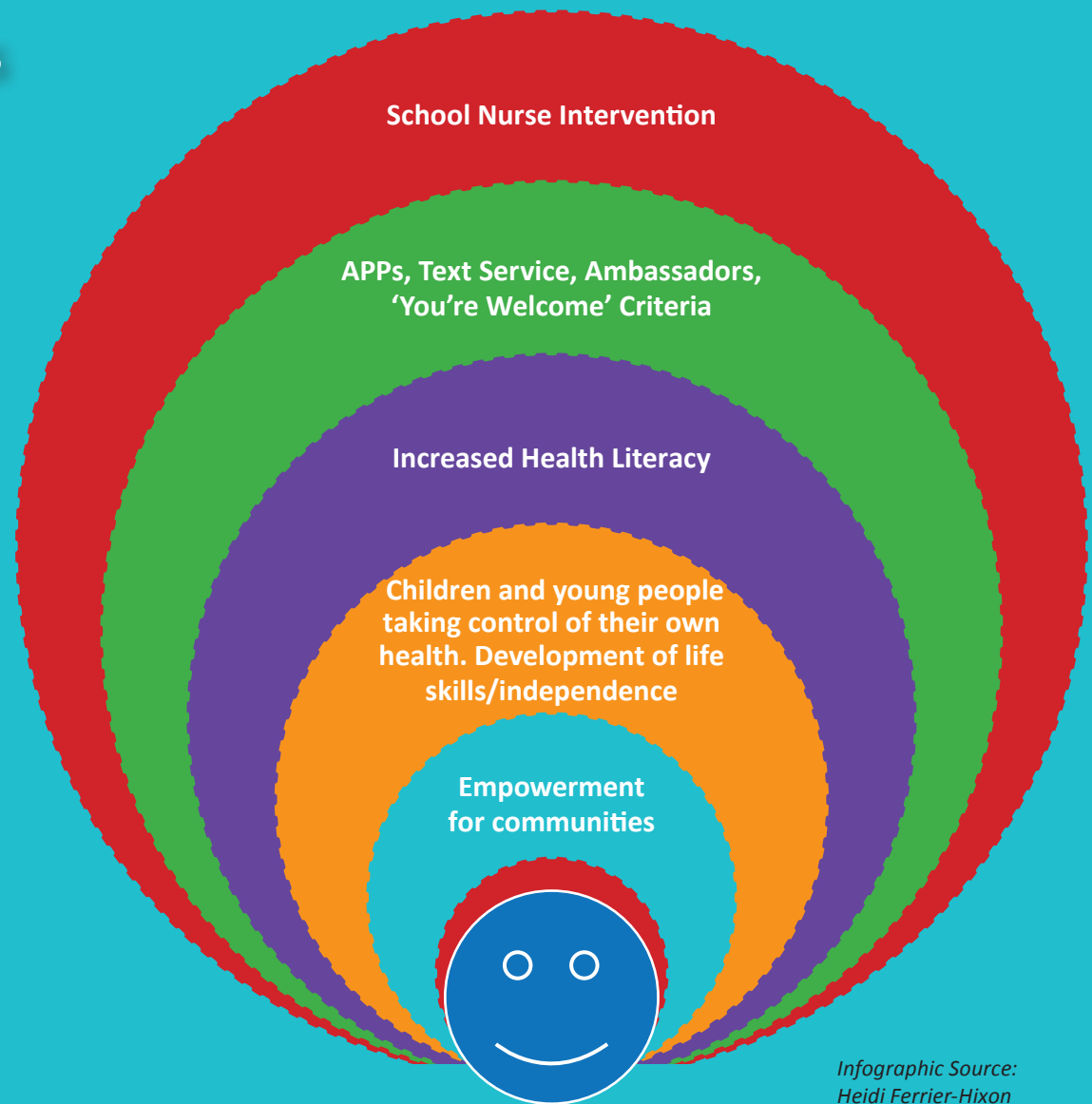
Nutbeam D (2000) Health literacy as a public health goal: A challenge for contemporary health education and communication strategies into the 21st century. *Health Promotion International* 15(3): 259–67  
<http://heapro.oxfordjournals.org/content/15/3/259.full.pdf+html>

Turner, G & Mackay, S The impact of school nurse interventions: Behaviour change and mental health, *British Journal of School Nursing*, Vol 10, Issue 10. 2015 <http://dx.doi.org/10.12968/bjsn.2015.10.10.494>

World Health Organization (1998) Health Promotion Glossary.

WHO, Geneva [www.who.int/healthpromotion/about/HPR%20Glossary%201998.pdf](http://www.who.int/healthpromotion/about/HPR%20Glossary%201998.pdf)

# Supporting an extended approach to health and wellbeing across communities



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