



SAPHNA Strategy

2025 - 2028



About SAPHNA

SAPHNA is a professional organisation and charity established in 2006, formed by a group of dedicated, experienced school and public health nurses from across the UK.

We are dedicated to the promotion of excellence in school and public health nursing practice for school-aged children and young people by supporting and developing the workforce and working in partnerships to influence health and care policy.

SAPHNA is recognised as the leading professional association that solely represents school and public health nurses voice of school and public health nurses across the UK.

Who Are School and Public Health Nurses?

'Public health, the science and art of promoting and protecting health and wellbeing, preventing ill-health and prolonging life through the organised efforts of society.'

Faculty of Public Health, 2016

School nurses are qualified nurses with additional post-graduate qualifications in specialist community public health nursing (SCPHN). School nurses are the leaders of the Healthy Child Programme 5-19, evidence informed public health framework of promotion, prevention, protection, and early intervention to improve health and wellbeing outcomes and reduce inequalities in school aged children and young people. They lead skilled mixed teams and work with a range of delivery partners to provide services to enable school aged children and young people to achieve their optimum health and wellbeing.

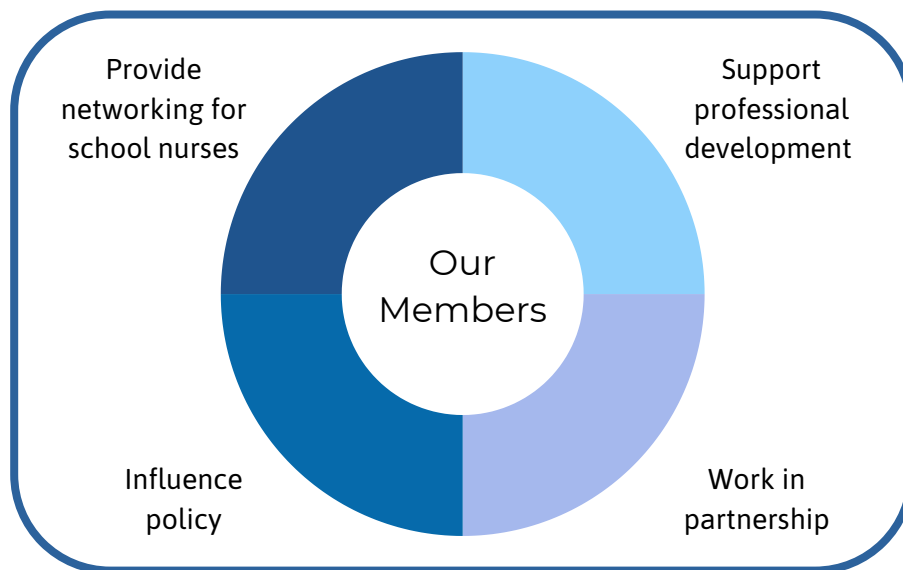
SAPHNA supports nurses who are part of the wider public health workforce. These are nurses who are not a specialist in public health however public health as part of their role, or have the opportunity or ability to positively impact health and wellbeing through their work and improve the health and wellbeing of school-aged children and young people.¹

1. RSPH, 2024



What We Do

We are membership organisation, having both corporate and individual members which alongside our corporate sponsors provide the income of the charity.



Provide networking for school nurses – SAPHNA hosts communities of practice and conferences to provide an opportunity for school and public health nurses to connect, share and develop their practice.

Support professional development – SAPHNA hosts webinars on a range of health and wellbeing topics, provide updates and shares best practice and guidance through 'Shout Outs' and newsletters and delivery of our conference programmes.

Influence policy – SAPHNA is part of coalitions with other organisations who share a goal to improve the health and wellbeing of school-aged children and young people. As part of these collaborations we respond to policy consultations, contribute to position statements, and raise awareness of contemporary issues faced by children and families.

Work in partnership – SAPHNA works with a range of organisations who share a goal to improve the health and wellbeing of school-aged children and young people and with government departments to raise awareness of the role of the school and public health nursing, provide intelligence from the frontline and advocate for the profession.



Our Team

Trustees

Our Board of Trustees has five members who have a wide range of skills from being clinical or academic in school nursing practice, to strategic leadership, business, and finance expertise. Our trustees meet regularly to ensure good governance and that SAPHNA is maintaining strong progress against our delivery plan.

Staff

We have a small team comprising professional officers, a chief operating officer and an administrator. Our professional officers are qualified school nurses who are the professional face of the organisation.

Volunteers

We have a team of over fifteen volunteers who form our 'Expert Advisory Group.' They are from clinical and academic backgrounds in the field of public health nursing. They have an array of specialist knowledge within the field of school and public health nursing including safeguarding children, mental health and wellbeing, sexual health, and special educational needs.

Partnerships

We work closely with other professional organisations and collaborations, such as Health Policy Influencing Group (HPIG), National Association of School Nurse Educations (NASNA), Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition (CYPMHC), and Health Conditions in Schools Alliance (HCIS).



SAPHNA Strategy

2025-2028

Our 3-year strategy sets out our mission, aims and objectives for the period 2025-2028. The purpose of this plan is to set clear objectives, to ensure each of the activities is moving us towards the delivery of our vision. This strategy delivers commencing financial year 2025-26, beginning August 2025.

The three-year strategic plan helps SAPHNA to think and plan which is important for resource management.

Our Trustees, staff, volunteers, and members have all helped with the shaping of this strategy and we thank everyone for their contributions.

Our Mission

Our Mission is to **support** the school and public health nursing workforce to provide **equality** and **excellence** in school nursing practice leading to **improved health outcomes** and **reduced inequalities** for all school-aged children, young people, their families and communities.

Our Promise

Our promise is to **raise the profile** of school and public health nursing as a workforce, **champion the vital contribution** and **impact** school nurses have on children and young people's health and wellbeing and reducing inequalities.

Our Vision

Our Vision is that school and public health nurses **lead and champion high quality, evidence-informed practice** so that school-aged children and young people have **equity of access** to school nursing services that will **improve their health and wellbeing** and **reduce health inequalities**.

Our Values

Excellence: in school nursing practice, supported by sharing innovation, contributing to research, and informed by evidence.

Partnership and collaboration: working with organisations and policy makers, ensuring that school-aged children and young people are at the centre of all we do. Co-producing with school aged children, young people, and their families.

Advocacy: promoting the unique contribution of all school nurses. Using evidence and practitioner intelligence to articulate the school nursing contribution to improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities.

Diversity and inclusion: Embracing and valuing diverse perspective and backgrounds in all that we do and challenging inequalities.

Integrity: As nurses, we will be open, transparent, trustworthy and do what is right to improve outcomes for school aged children, young people.

Our 2025 - 2028 Strategy

SAPHNA has three areas of focus, each with two key priorities. These are large goals which we believe we can work creatively, collaboratively and in a timely way to bring about change.

The areas of focus are:

AREA OF FOCUS 1

Professional Development and Workforce

- Providing targeted professional development
- Raising standards and promote excellence

AREA OF FOCUS 2

Policy Influence and Partnership

- Influencing health and care policy and practice
- Raising awareness of school nursing and its importance in improving health outcomes

AREA OF FOCUS 3

Research and Education

- Promoting and participating in research
- Developing an environment of academic and professional excellence

AREA OF FOCUS 1

Professional Development and Workforce

Priorities:

- To identify, highlight and provide targeted professional development to support career development and service delivery
- To raise standards and promote excellence in practice by building expertise, developing leaders, creating networks, and promoting innovation in practice

Why is this important?

In our inaugural survey of school and public health nurses we heard that capacity in services has reduced. Workforce figures suggest a 33% reduction in the number of school nurses over the past decade. Consequently, the professional is feeling frustrated at a lack of capacity to respond to growing and more complex needs of school-aged children and young people. This coincides with the erosion of the role because support at child protection level is leaving less of time to deliver their public health role.

Nurses expressed feelings that they are not using their specialist public health skills and becoming de-skilled. This impacts on recruitment and retention, a national challenge for all of nursing. In our survey 37% of those nurses aged 51 years and older indicated that they planned to retire in the next 3 years. Whilst three quarters of those responding to the survey indicated that they enjoyed their role, themes of job satisfaction dwindling, erosion of the role, and impact of staff wellbeing were identified as reasons they might leave. There is a need to develop a robust workforce plan and model, guidance on safe staffing, skill mix and strengthening the leadership capabilities to lead delivery of the Healthy Child Programme 5-19 at team, service, regional and national levels.

Whilst there are workforce challenges, the workforce demonstrated that they continue to develop good practice and innovate, responding to emerging need, streamlining practice and offering team support. In the survey there were many local examples of service development, our members tell us that they would be welcome opportunities to network and share good practice.

AREA OF FOCUS 2

Policy Influence and Partnership

Priorities:

- To collaborate and connect with like-minded organisations to influence health and care policy and practice for children and young people's health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities
- To raise awareness and articulate the value of school nursing and of the benefits of improving capacity and capability of the workforce to deliver evidence-based practices that improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people and reduce health inequalities

Why is this important?

The Darzi Report recognised the prevention is better than cure, this review led to the government plans to reform healthcare which includes shifts from treatment to prevention and hospital to community outlines. The school and public health nursing is a key to these plans, it is essential to grow and develop the workforce if the health and wellbeing of school-aged children and young people is to be improved and inequalities reduced. However, in our [inaugural survey](#), nurses told us that there is lack of understanding of the school nurse role leading to variation in how the service is commissioned and a reduction in funding affecting service delivery, both in what is delivered and who is delivering. SAPHNA needs to advocate on behalf of the workforce, raising awareness and articulating the values to those who influence or make policy decisions, decide funding and commission services.

AREA OF FOCUS 3

Research and Education

Priorities:

- To promote and participate in research, ensuring dissemination of findings
- To work in partnerships with Approved Education Institutes to develop an environment of academic and professional excellence that enables school nurses to grow and flourish

Why is this important?

Registered nurses use evidence-based knowledge, professional and clinical judgement to assess, plan, implement and evaluate high-quality nursing care. Nursing is a safety-critical profession. Education and research are two of the four pillars that this is founded on. It is essential that we:

- Support development of a highly skilled workforce for the future, promoting the valuable role of school nurses, contributing to the development of a structured career pathway and contributing to the growth of strong leadership.
- Grow evidence of the indispensable role and impact of school and public health nurses in improving health and wellbeing outcomes and reducing inequalities for school-aged children and young people.

Our Key Objectives

Underpinning our priorities and areas of focus are objectives, which outline how we will achieve and measure our progress. We have an operational delivery plan which contains detailed activities under each of our objectives.

Year One (2025 - 2026)

1. Over the next 12 months we will explore and engage new opportunities to develop and grow SAPHNA to ensure that it has a sustainable future to deliver the strategy, supporting school and public health nursing.

How will we do this?

- We will work with our academic colleagues and partners to identify opportunities for research into the role of school nurses in improving outcomes for school-aged children and young people, disseminating findings to improve practice.
- We will use the feedback from our members survey to review of membership offer to ensure that it meets their needs and offers good value for money
- We will explore opportunities to generate income through a variety of avenues including increasing membership, grant applications and sponsorship opportunities with organisations/companies that align with our constitution.

How will we know that we achieved this?

- We will see an increase in research projects that are initiated, and if complete, disseminated.
- Our annual survey of members at the end of year one will demonstrate an increase in satisfaction and engagement of our members.
- Our membership numbers at the end of year one will have increased by 5%.
- Our income generation at the end of year one will have increased by 5%.

Year One (2025 - 2026)

2. Over the next 12 months we will expand our training and professional development to support the development of excellence in school and public health nursing practice.

How will we do this?

- We will develop and deliver communities of practice, in areas identified by our members, leading to the production of resources to support school and public health nursing practice.
- We will develop and deliver a programme of webinars, on topics identified by our members.
- We will increase our training and support offer, developing and delivering courses and workshops, on topics identified by our members.
- We will develop our support to school nursing students contributing to growing and sustaining our future workforce.
- We will strengthen the governance and structure of our 'Expert Advisory Group' (EAG) to improve the effectiveness of their contribution to SAPHNA's work.

How will we know that we achieved this?

- We will develop a minimum of three Communities of Practice, delivering each Community of Practice each academic term.
- We will develop and disseminate a good practice resource per community of practice at the end of year one.
- We will deliver two webinars per academic term which received a good level of evaluation from those attending.
- We will increase engagement with Approved Educational Institutions who deliver the school nursing, school and public health nursing programme by 5%.
- We will demonstrate, via our annual EAG survey, a 25% improvement in engagement and contribution of the EAG.

Year One (2025 - 2026)

3. We will work with key partners and collaborate with key organisations to ensure that the voice of school nursing is heard by those influence and make policy that seeks to improve the health and wellbeing of school-aged children and young people, and to reduce health inequalities.

How will we do this?

- We will continue to work with key partners to continue our campaigning for #ASchoolNurseInEverySchool.
- We will work with other organisations whose focus aligns to our priorities, through membership of collaborative which focus on influencing policy.
- We will engage with relevant government departments to advocate for school and public health nursing, ensuring that the need to grow and develop the workforce and recognise the value and contribution they make to improving outcomes for school-aged children and young people is recognised.

How will we know that we achieved this?

- We will deliver a third #ASchoolNurseInEverySchool roundtable event which reviews and demonstrates progress and commitment towards our campaign.
- We will publish in our annual report, SAPHNA's contribution towards policy influencing in areas aligned to our priorities.

Year Two/Three (2026 - 2028)

We will enhance our digital capability and presence to ensure that SAPHNA is visible and accessible to our members and partners.

How will we do this?

- During year 2 we will review our website provision with the intention of improving functionality and accessibility.
- Explore creative approaches to sharing resources and best practice, using digital tools and platforms, that provide an alternative engagement opportunity to social media.
- Explore digital training platforms to diversify and expand our professional development training offer.
- Deliver an effective social media engagement strategy to better inform our members and the wider public.

How will we know that we achieved this?

- We will have an improved website that has been designed to target our key audiences with tailored content and resources.
- Positive feedback from the community about their experience engaging with our digital presence.
- Increase in website traffic by 5%.
- Reduction in website drop-offs by 5%.
- 5% monthly increase in social media followers and/or engagement statistics.
- Increase our training offer to include three new digital training courses on a bespoke training platform.

How Are We Doing?

This document identifies the high-level priorities and key objectives. We will use this strategy to develop headline reporting to share with our members annually and this will allow our members to see how we are progressing towards achieving our priorities and adjusting our plans for the year ahead to ensure that we stay on track.

Alongside this strategy document we will develop a detailed operational plan with timescales, responsibilities, business cases, funding requirements and key performance indicators. This will be a real-time document to support the governance and will be monitored by the Board of Trustees on a quarterly basis.