

## ***INTERIM CAREER FRAMEWORK FOR SPECIALIST PRACTICE NURSING ROLES***

### ***Supporting Specialist Nursing in Health and Social Care***



July 2017

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Particular thanks to the Head of Services, NI Macmillan Cancer Support, who was also the former Chair of the Long-term Conditions Alliance NI, for chairing the Steering Group and the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery (NIPEC), which led the project management. Thanks also for the commitment and contribution of the Steering Group members, made up of representation from: senior nurses in HSC Trusts, Public Health Agency (PHA), education providers, Hospices, Department of Health (DoH), Royal College of Nursing (RCN), Unison. Also represented on the Group were the Directors of Human Resource (HR) Forum and NIPEC Council (See Appendix 1).

In addition, it is important to acknowledge the role played by all those who commented on the various drafts of the Framework and provided guidance in relation to the core components of this important nursing role.

*Career Framework for Specialist Practice Nursing Roles: Supporting Specialist Nursing in Health and Social Care Trusts 2017. Pending publication.*

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## FOREWORD

*Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together*<sup>1</sup> sets out ambitious plans to transform health and social care. Delivering on this agenda requires all of us to work differently and at the highest standard of our practice.

I want the *Career Framework* for Specialist Practice Nurses<sup>2</sup> to help clarify and strengthen this important clinical practice role, which is essential to support the transformational changes required to deliver the world class service described in *Delivering Together*. Our Specialist Nurses have a vital role to play in the multidisciplinary teams to ensure that services meet the needs of their populations, through effective co-production with service users, collaborative engagement and impact measurement of outcomes.

The *Career Framework* outlines the core competencies for all those practitioners who are:

- employed as a Specialist Nurse, holding an NMC recordable Specialist Practice Qualification;
- employed as a District Nurse holding an NMC recordable Specialist Practice Qualification; or
- employed as NMC registered Specialist Community Public Health Nurse (SCPHN).

In addition, the *Framework* will be enhanced with a number of specific core competencies in particular areas of specialist practice designed to support:

- practitioners in the role and those aspiring to Specialist Nursing roles;
- the introduction of new Specialist Nursing roles to facilitate service developments;
- education providers to enhance the professional development of these practitioners.

The *Framework* will be reviewed three-yearly to ensure it stays aligned with other relevant professional resources and government policy.



**PROFESSOR CHARLOTTE McARDLE**

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Health (2016) *Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together*. Belfast: DoH

<sup>2</sup> Specialist Practice Nurses hereafter referred to as Specialist Nurses

## CHIEF NURSING OFFICER

### 1. WHAT IS THE CAREER FRAMEWORK FOR SPECIALIST PRACTICE NURSES?

This *Career Framework* sets out the core generic skills, knowledge and behaviours (competencies) relevant to specialist practice nursing roles, regardless of the area of practice. Each specialist area of practice will have its own specific competencies and learning requirements for practitioners which should be used in conjunction with this core *Framework*.

It has been agreed to develop core specific competencies for a number of Specialist Practice areas which, once developed and agreed, will be inserted into the Annex of this *Framework*; see Table 1.

**Table 1. Core competencies for specific areas of practice**

Developed and Agreed	Under Development
Cancer	Diabetes (Children's)
Diabetes (Adult)	District Nursing
	Palliative Care
	Tissue Viability

### 2. WHO IS THE CAREER FRAMEWORK FOR?

The *Framework* is designed to be used by:

- Specialist Nurses to guide their ongoing development in the area of practice
- nurses interested in becoming a Specialist in their preferred area of practice;
- strategic workforce planners to develop the Specialist Nursing workforce locally and regionally
- managers to assess the competence of their workforce; identify gaps and plan the necessary development needed;
- education providers, to inform the nature and type of learning and development that is needed at various stages and in various areas of Specialist Nursing; and
- the public and other Health and Social Care (HSC) professionals as a guide to the core competencies required by Specialist Nurses.

Specialist Nurses should use the *Career Framework* alongside other competency frameworks including those relevant to their speciality or role. It is not designed to replace other frameworks, systems or requirements (including for example professional codes of conduct, pay and grading systems, qualifications).

### 3. CORE COMPONENTS OF SPECIALIST NURSING ROLES

Specialist Nurses practise as a member of a team, guided by *The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses and midwives* (Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), 2015). These Nurses undertake comprehensive health assessments, may diagnose and prescribe care and treatment. The components of this level of practice are outlined in Table 2<sup>3</sup>. See Appendix 2 for the characteristics which distinguish between Specialist and Advanced Nursing Practice.

<b>Components of Practice</b>	<b>Specialist Nurses</b>
Clinical Practice & Scope of Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work as member of a team, within a defined area of nursing practice;</li> <li>• undertake comprehensive assessments with differential diagnoses and may diagnose;</li> <li>• prescribe care and treatment or appropriately refers and may discharge; and</li> <li>• contribute to education, innovation and research.</li> </ul>
Supervision Requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• professional nursing supervision.</li> </ul>
Service Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contribute to policy and service development; and</li> <li>• contribute to service improvement initiatives</li> </ul>
Education & Professional Requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Live NMC registration</li> <li>• BSc (Hons) in Nursing or other Health Related Subject;</li> <li>• <sup>4</sup>NMC recorded Specialist Practice qualification; and</li> <li>• may require a NMC recorded Non-Medical Prescribing qualification.</li> </ul>

**Only those who meet the requirements of the Specialist Nurse role and who are employed as a Specialist Nurse, are permitted to use the term Specialist in their job title, and should do so.**

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from the Department of Health (2016) *Advanced Nursing Practice Framework, Supporting Advanced Nursing Practice in Health and Social Care Trusts*. Belfast: NIPEC.

<sup>4</sup> If the NMC recordable specialist practice qualification is not related to the area of practice then relevant modules and experience are required.

#### 4. CORE COMPETENCIES FOR SPECIALIST NURSING ROLES

In Northern Ireland, the Specialist Nursing roles are supported by a set of four core competency domains<sup>5</sup> :

- Clinical Practice
- Education and Learning
- Research and Evidenced Based Practice
- Management and Leadership

The four core domains relevant to these roles have specific learning outcomes and are presented on the pages below. The learning outcomes have been developed to guide:

- ongoing learning and development of the individual employed in the role;
- competence development of those aspiring to the role;
- curriculum development of Educational and Training programmes (commissioned by the DoH);
- development of core job descriptions for Specialist Nursing roles.

The core domains and learning outcomes have been mapped against the four themes of the NMC Code (2015)<sup>6</sup> and Knowledge and Skills Framework (DH, 2004)<sup>7</sup>. The *Framework* also complements other generic competency frameworks which are relevant to the Nurses' roles, such as; Healthcare Leadership Model (NHS Leadership Academy 2013)<sup>8</sup>; and the Quality 2020 Attributes Framework (DHSSPS 2014)<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> The core competencies have been developed from work already completed in Scotland and by Macmillan Cancer Support and Public Health England.

<sup>6</sup> Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) (2015) *The code: professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses and midwives*. London: NMC.

<sup>7</sup> Department of Health (DH) (2004) *The NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (NHS KSF) and the Development Review Process*. London: DH.

<sup>8</sup> National Health Service Leadership Academy (2013) *Healthcare Leadership Model* at <http://www.leadershipacademy.nhs.uk/discover/leadership-framework>

<sup>9</sup> Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) (2014) *Supporting Leadership for Quality Improvement and Safety: An Attributes Framework for Health and Social Care*. Belfast: Health and Social Care Board and Public Health Agency.

## Core Competency Domains and Learning Outcomes

### **Core Competency Domain: Clinical Practice**

The Specialist Nurse maintains, develops, and analyses knowledge of the relevant area of practice including the relevant epidemiology, prevention, process, diagnosis, treatments and care interventions to make professional judgements in meeting the needs of patients/clients and their families/carers.

**NMC Code Theme:** Practise Effectively, Preserve Safety, Promotes Professionalism and Trust;

**KSF Core Dimensions:** Personal and People Development, Health and Safety, Quality.

### **Core Learning Outcomes:**

- Understands diagnostic pathways, investigations, interventions and treatments in own area of practice.
- Applies specialist knowledge, skills and behaviours relevant to the area of practice.
- Acts as a source of specialist knowledge and assists in meeting the information needs of individuals, their families, carers and staff members both directly and indirectly through information provision and signposting.
- Contributes as a key member of the multi-professional team through the development and implementation of collaborative and innovative practices including the use of technology.
- Contributes to multi-professional and interagency discussions related to critical, serious and adverse incidents and/or root cause analysis.
- Applies ethical processes to enable informed decision making, giving due consideration to the management of clinical risk.
- Advocates for the rights of individuals, their families and carers within the care environment and recognises the influences of power, control and conflict.
- Incorporates professional accountability and responsibility to ensure safe and effective practice within the context of the multi-professional team to meet the needs of patients/clients, their families and carers.
- Contributes to the development and review of protocols and standard operating procedures.
- Analyses health and care technologies and provide feedback to inform selection and use in own area of practice.
- Evaluates all actions and interventions and modifies care in light of the evaluation.



## Core Competency Domains and Learning Outcomes

### Core Competency Domain: Education and Learning

The Specialist Nurse maintains and develops professional knowledge and practice by participating in lifelong learning, personal and professional development for self and with colleagues through supervision, appraisal and reflective practice.

**NMC Code Theme:** Prioritise People, Practise Effectively, Promote Professionalism & Trust;

**KSF Core Dimension:** Communication, Personal and People Development

#### Core Learning Outcomes:

- Accepts personal responsibility for professional development and the maintenance of professional competence and credibility.
- Engages in clinical supervision, reflective practice and self-evaluation and uses this to improve care and practice.
- Facilitates others to care for patients/clients, their families and carers through provision of specialist nursing advice and support.
- Supervises and supports others within the scope of each individual's role, competence and capability.
- Identifies and participates in the development, delivery and evaluation of educational initiatives for health and social care providers that address the needs of patients/clients, their families and carers.
- Participates in local, regional and national clinical forums or professional groups and facilitates sustainable partnerships.
- Participates in uni-disciplinary and/or multi-disciplinary teaching
- Facilitates an effective learning environment to support the professional development of staff and students.

## Core Competency Domains and Learning Outcomes

### Core Competency Domain: Research and Evidence-based Practice

The Specialist Nurse develops and updates knowledge of research evidence, and policy initiatives relevant to caring for patients/clients, their families and carers, to promote and develop effective, evidence-based practice

**NMC Code Theme:** Practise Effectively

**KSF Core Dimension:** Quality

#### Core Learning Outcomes:

- Maintains and develops knowledge and understanding of relevant local, regional and national policies and guidelines and collaborates with other members of the multi-professional/multi-agency team to implement them in own area of practice.
- Critically appraises research in specialist area and uses knowledge of relevant findings to inform clinical decision making.
- Works collaboratively with others to initiate the implementation of research and audit findings into practice.
- Uses specialist knowledge of the field of practice to identify areas of potential research and audit.
- Contributes to audit and research design, data collection and analysis.
- Disseminates audit, quality improvement and research findings through presentations and publications and to service improvement locally in collaboration with the multi-professional team.

## Core Competency Domains and Learning Outcomes

### **Core Competency Domain: Leadership & Management**

The Specialist Nurse works in partnership with other practitioners and agencies to improve health and wellbeing. S/He engages with and leads teams, managing resources and facilitating change to enhance the delivery of quality person-centred care and services.

**NMC Code Theme:** Prioritise People, Preserve Safety, Promote Professionalism & Trust;

**KSF Core Dimension:** Communication, Service Improvement, Equality & Diversity

### **Core Learning Outcomes:**

- Works collaboratively to identify gaps in service provision within own setting and across geographical and organisational boundaries.
- Works collaboratively to implement initiatives to streamline patient care and enhance or redesign services.
- Acts as a change agent and encourages staff to contribute ideas and solutions for quality improvement and innovation.
- Understand and contribute to Patient and Public (PPI) Involvement through co-design and co-production initiatives and activities.
- Actively contributes to relevant professional networks.
- Negotiates and influences locally in relation to professional practice.
- Responds in a transparent and structured way to any complaints about care or services.
- Promotes teamwork with defined areas of responsibility.
- Contributes to and manages other members of the team by sharing information and experience.
- Influences the multi-professional team in the development and management of services that meet the needs of patients/clients, their families and carers.

## 5. Supervision Requirements

The NMC requires that all Nurses aim to improve their performance and enhance the safety and quality of care through evaluation, supervision and appraisal (NMC, 2014)<sup>10</sup>. In NI the Chief Nursing Officer published two Nursing Supervision Standards to support all Nurses to have access to a minimum of two supervision sessions per annum<sup>11</sup>. Although Specialist Nurses' work is varied and complex, the model used by Clinical Nurse Specialists in the *Job Planning Guidance Toolkit* (PHA & NIPEC, 2014)<sup>12</sup> is a useful guide for Specialist Nurses to build supervision into their respective roles, see Figure 1.

### Figure 1. Clinical and Supporting Professional Activity Sessions

1. **Clinical Activity Sessions**, these can include activities such as: independent clinics; multi-disciplinary clinics; ward based work; case management discussions and telephone consultations.
2. **Supporting Professional Activity Sessions**, which can incorporate for example, audit; quality improvement; clinical governance; CPD including supervision; teaching; research and administration.

*In an average full-time working week of ten sessions the split between Clinical Activities and Supporting Professional Activities will vary.*

## 6. Continuous Professional Development within the role

The NMC Code (2015) requires all Nurses to:

*“ Keep your knowledge and skills up to date, taking part in appropriate and regular learning and professional development activities that aim to maintain and develop your competence and improve your performance.”*

*(para. 22.3, p. 17)*

It is essential that Specialist Nurses undertake relevant learning and development to keep developing in their role and ensuring that their practice is up-to-date and evidence based, demonstrating an in-depth knowledge and skills in their specialist area of practice.

<sup>10</sup> Nursing and Midwifery Council (2014) *Standards for Competence for Registered Nurses*. London: NMC.

<sup>11</sup> Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (2007) *Standards for Supervision for Nursing*. Belfast: DHSSPS.

<sup>12</sup> Public Health Agency (PHA) and NIPEC (2014) *Job Planning Guidance Toolkit for Clinical Nurse Specialist Roles*. Belfast: PHA

## 7. Career Progression from Specialist Nursing Roles

Often it can be hard for Specialist Nurses to find roles in which they can advance their career. It may sometimes feel that once a particular career path has been chosen there doesn't seem to be anyway of progressing on from it. Many Specialist Nurses want to keep close to their patients/clients and practice and may develop a specific interest in their clinical role for example in teaching, research or quality improvement. Some may choose to develop their role as an Advanced Nurse Practitioner or a Consultant Nurse. Such additions to a practitioner's role can provide great job satisfaction whilst developing an additional knowledge and skills set.

Other Specialist Nurses may after a time move out of clinical practice into for example a Management/Leadership role or into Education/Research. It is important that wherever the Specialist Nurse is working that they keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date whilst taking on new skills and challenges.

The advice for all Nurses not just Specialist Nurses is:

- don't limit your career goals,
- join a network
- seek opportunities and try new things
- get involved in service/quality improvement activities, practice development
- scan the horizon for new technologies, ways of working, models of care

The NI nursing and midwifery career pathway website and the career specific pathway section is a useful resource which highlights the wide variety of nursing roles and in particular those in specialist practice

<http://www.nursingandmidwiferycareersni.hscni.net>

## Membership of Steering Group

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Representative</b>
NI Macmillan Cancer Support & Long-term Conditions Alliance NI (LTCANI)	Heather Monteverde MBE (Project Chair)
NIPEC	Cathy McCusker (Project Lead)
Public Health Agency	Mary Jo Thompson until April 2016 Rose McHugh from April 2016 Loretta Gribben from November 2016
Belfast HSC Trust	Aisling Pelan
Northern HSC Trust	Allison Hume
South Eastern HSC Trust	Sharon McRoberts
Southern HSC Trust	Dawn Ferguson
Western HSC Trust	Annetta Quigley
MacMillan	Genevieve Murphy
Hospices/Palliative Care	Loretta Gribben until September 2016 Yvonne Martin from October 2016
Clinical Education Centre	Majella Doran
Queens University Belfast	Dr Kevin Gormley
Ulster University	Hilary Thompson
Royal College of Nursing	Rita Devlin
Unison	Clare Martin from 7 July 2016
Department of Health & Education Commissioning Group	Heather Finlay
NIPEC Council Member	Lisa Houlihan

## Appendix 2

### Distinguishing characteristics between Specialist Practice Nurse, Advanced Practice Nurse and Consultant Nurse and Midwife Roles *Adapted from Advanced Nursing Practice Framework (DHSSPS, 2016)*

Components of Practice	Specialist Practice Nurse	Advanced Nurse Practitioner	Consultant Nurse & Consultant Midwife
Clinical Practice & Scope of Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work as member of a team, within a defined area of nursing practice;</li> <li>• undertake comprehensive assessments with differential diagnoses and may diagnose;</li> <li>• prescribe care and treatment or appropriately refers and may discharge; and</li> <li>• contribute to education, innovation and research.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work autonomously using a person-centred approach within the expanded scope of practice</li> <li>• undertake comprehensive health assessment with differential diagnosis and will diagnose</li> <li>• prescribe care and treatment or appropriately refers and/or discharges patients/clients</li> <li>• provide complex care using expert decision-making skills</li> <li>• act as an educator, leader, innovator and contributor to research.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exercise advanced levels of clinical judgment, knowledge and skill and possess a high degree of personal/professional autonomy to enable complex decision-making</li> <li>• use an innovative, person-centred approach to contribute to better outcomes and experience for patients/clients, families, carers or communities</li> <li>• provide strategic professional leadership to support improvements in professional practice, standards of care and effective identification and management of risk within the organisation's clinical governance framework</li> <li>• act as an educator for colleagues wishing to develop advanced knowledge and skills and establish university links to provide academic and research support</li> <li>• develop and influence professional practice locally and nationally through the promotion and evaluation of evidence-based practice, research and service development</li> <li>• present and contribute to local/national professional conferences, special interest groups/working parties, research and relevant publication</li> <li>• lead and facilitate interprofessional working</li> </ul>
Supervision Requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• professional nursing supervision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supervision relevant to the area of practice*</li> <li>• professional nursing supervision.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supervision relevant to the area of practice through local/national professional networks</li> <li>• professional nursing/midwifery supervision.</li> </ul>
Service Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contribute to policy and service development</li> <li>• contribute to service improvement initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• responsible for policy development, implementation and service development</li> <li>• lead on service improvement initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work with DoH and other relevant organisations to influence policy development and service/quality improvement</li> <li>• lead on service/quality improvement initiatives at local, regional and national level</li> <li>• lead innovations across multidisciplinary teams.</li> </ul>
Education Requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• live NMC registration</li> <li>• BSc (Hons) in Nursing or other Health Related Subject;</li> <li>• NMC recorded Specialist Practice qualification; and</li> <li>• may require a NMC recorded Non-Medical Prescribing qualification.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• live NMC registration</li> <li>• has completed a Master's programme in the relevant area of practice</li> <li>• NMC recorded Non-Medical Prescribing V300.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• live NMC registration</li> <li>• have completed a Master's Degree as a minimum</li> <li>• have completed a post-graduate qualification within the relevant area of practice</li> <li>• may require a NMC recorded Non-Medical Prescribing qualification.</li> <li>• pursuing continuous professional and scholarly activity.</li> </ul>

\* The Advanced Nurse Practitioner should receive supervision from an expert within the relevant area of practice. In some instances this may be a practitioner from a discipline other than nursing for example a GMC registered Consultant/Specialty Doctor grade or equivalent

