NIPEC
Northern Ireland Practice & Education Council

A CAREER PATHWAY FOR NURSES IN NURSING HOMES

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INTRODUCTION

As the largest professional group in healthcare, nurses play a pivotal role in the delivery of safe, effective, compassionate and quality person-centred care. Their unique combination of knowledge, skills, compassion and dedication makes them indispensable in preventing ill-health and promoting and maintaining the health and well-being of individuals and communities across the lifespan.

The contribution of nurses working is Nursing Homes is largely understated. Nurses working in this setting display a high level of autonomy and are often responsible for complex decision making. In June 2025 in Northern Ireland there were 242 Nursing Homes. Of these there are 111 different Registered Providers or Organisations[1]. In addition, on the 2023 care home census completed on behalf of the Department of Health, it was identified that there are approximately 3800 registered nurses working in Nursing Homes[2]. Whilst there is no readily available data on Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs) working in Nursing Homes it is recognised that they make a vital contribution to the nursing home workforce in Northern Ireland. Their diverse experiences, cultural perspectives, and clinical expertise enrich the delivery of person-centred care and strengthen multidisciplinary teams.

It is essential that IENs, along with all other nurses working in Nursing Homes, are supported through structured induction, orientation, and preceptorship programmes that recognise their unique transition needs. By fostering an inclusive and supportive environment, nursing homes can ensure that all nurses are empowered to thrive and progress within the career pathway, contributing meaningfully to the health and wellbeing of residents.

Nursing Homes operate across a wide range of specialities and are required to be registered with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) to deliver these services. The 'Categories of Registration' are in table 1.

1 Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA)
2 The Department of Health

Table 1

Category	Definition
I	Old age not falling within any other category
E	Service users who are over 65 years of age but do not fall within the category of old age
DE	Dementia
MP	Mental disorder excluding learning disability or dementia
MP(E)	Mental disorder excluding learning disability or dementia – over 65 years
LD	Learning Disability
LD(E)	Learning disability – over 65 years
PH	Physical disability other than sensory impairment
PH(E)	Physical disability other than sensory impairment – over 65 years
D	Past or present drug dependence
A	Past or present alcohol dependence
TI	Terminally Ill
SI	Sensory Impairment

The Care Standards for Nursing Homes and the Nursing Home Regulations are key reference points and although they are the cornerstone of operational management they can also support the professional development of the nurse through the career pathway.

BACKGROUND

Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nurses and Midwives (NIPEC) have compiled a suite of frameworks which are building blocks to support career progression and professional development. The core elements within these frameworks, in particular the Registered Staff Nurse and Registered Senior Staff Nurse role framework, have been used to support the development of the career pathway for nurses in care homes.

Nursing is a safety critical profession founded on four pillars: clinical practice, education, research, and leadership. Nurses use evidence-based knowledge, professional and clinical judgement to assess, plan, implement and evaluate high-quality person-centred nursing care[3].

This career pathway was developed in collaboration with key stakeholders including Nursing Home organisations, Health and Social Care Trusts, Education Providers, Nurse Researchers, Royal College of Nursing, Trade Union, Department of Health (DoH) and Public Health Agency (PHA).

The Roles within the Pathway

These roles are the core nursing roles included within the career pathway. The pathway nor the roles are prescriptive, nor are they designed to impact on organisational structure.

It is recognised that nursing home providers may have other job roles within their organisational structure not included in the pathway. Should those roles be mapped and assessed as being a similar 'levels', the related education and competencies can be applied. E.g. a clinical lead role in 1 organisation may be similar to the Sister/Charge Nurse role in another organisation.

The pathway should be used to support the career development of nurses working in nursing homes across Northern Ireland (see figure 1).

3 https://www.rcn.org.uk/Professional-Development/Definition-and-principles-of-nursing

Figure 1 Core Roles within the career pathway

LEVELS OF PRACTICE

Level of Practice	Role Overview
2	People at level 2 require basic factual knowledge of a field of work. They may carry out clinical, technical, scientific or administrative duties and provide safe, effective, person-centred care under the direction of a registrant.
3	People at level 3 require knowledge of facts, processes and general concepts in a field of work. They may carry out a wider range of duties than a person working at level 2 and will have more responsibility, with supervision by a registrant.
4	People at level 4 require factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work. Work is guided by standard operating procedures, protocols or systems of work and they may have responsibility for supervision.
BSc (Hons) or MSc (Hons) to Registered Nurse and Registered Midwife	
5	People at level 5 will have a comprehensive, factual and theoretical knowledge on registration. They use knowledge to solve problems creatively, make judgements which require analysis and interpretation, and actively contribute to service development, supervision or training.
6	People at level 6 require a critical understanding of detailed theoretical and practical knowledge, are specialist and/or have management, education and leadership responsibilities. They demonstrate initiative and creativity in finding solutions with responsibility for team performance and development.
7	People at level 7 have a critical awareness of knowledge and issues in the field and at the interface between different fields. They are innovative and have a responsibility for developing and changing practice and/or services in a complex and unpredictable environment.
8	People at level 8 require highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work. They are leaders with considerable responsibility, and the ability to research and analyse complex processes. They may lead policy, research, education or service delivery and improvement and have clinical, management or education responsibilities.
9	People working at level 9 require knowledge at the most advanced frontier of the field of work and at the interface between fields. They will have responsibility for the development and delivery of a service to a population or leading research at the highest level of the organisation.

The Levels of Practice reflect role development and progression similar to the Knowledge and Skills Framework. The Level of Practice does not equate to the banding of Agenda for Change, which is related to remuneration.

The levels are aligned to four pillars of practice: Clinical Practice, Education and Learning, Leadership and Research and Development (Figure 2). It is the underpinning knowledge, skills and behaviours outlined in the 4 pillars of practice which determine the level of practice of each role. This will enable a standardised approach to the design and delivery of models of nursing and midwifery roles across service provision to support delivery of safe and effective person-centred care.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND BEHAVIOURS

All roles within the pathway have been organised around four pillars, previously known as domains. The Pillars of Practice (Figure 2.) outline the breadth and range of knowledge, skills and behaviours required to practice safely and effectively across the wide variety of roles and settings, as described below:

Clinical Practice: It is important that individuals acquire key clinical knowledge, skills and behaviours appropriate to their specific job to ensure the delivery of safe and effective person-centred care. This will support workforce planning and workforce modelling to enable the right people, with the right skills are in the right place at the right time.

Education and Learning: The pillars of practice will define educational requirements to support individuals to maintain and advance their knowledge, skills and behaviour throughout their career journey.

Leadership: The leadership pillar of practice promotes the importance of the role of registrants in inspiring and managing practice, demonstrating professionalism and accountability at every level.

Research and Development: This pillar focuses on advancing nursing and midwifery practice through evidence-based care, continuous learning and dissemination of practice to improve healthcare outcomes.

Clinical Practice

Knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to provide high quality healthcare that is safe, effective and person centred.

Education and Learning

Knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to enable effective learning in the workplace.

Leadership

Knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to lead and to fulfil management responsibilities.

Research and Development

Knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to use evidence to inform practice and improve services.

Figure 2

A **Staff Assessment & Development Tool** will help staff, in consultation with their line manager, to reflect on their current job role and identify areas where further training and development could enhance or advance their skills in each pillar of practice.

For each job role, greater emphasis may be placed on one of the pillars e.g. clinical practice will have a greater emphasis for a staff nurse than leadership. There should however, be a focus in developing under all four pillars.

RQIA provide guidance on training for Nursing Homes in accordance with the Nursing Home Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005 Regulation 20.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the educational requirements specific to the roles, individuals should also have access to a range of ongoing professional development activities to enable them to continue to enhance their knowledge and skills throughout their career. The NIPEC Learning and Development Framework is available to guide and signpost nurses in their continuing professional development.

These include:

- Mandatory training.
- Training related to the specialist area of practice in which a nurse works e.g. dementia care.
- Appraisal and personal development planning.

Registered Nurses are required to engage in the following:

- Reflective Supervision with access to peer support and professional networks relevant to the role;
- Preceptorship processes e.g. Northern Ireland Preceptorship Framework;
- Local and national initiatives;
- Management and leadership development;
- Quality Improvement initiatives; and
- Practice Supervisor / Practice Assessor for Nursing students and support for other learners.

All nurses using this career pathway should use the self-assessment and development tool to map the core knowledge, skills and behaviours included in the career pathway document with their nursing practice. (insert link to tool when available)

TERMINOLOGY AND PERSON-CENTRED CARE

In this document, individuals living in nursing homes are referred to as residents rather than patients. This distinction is intentional and aligns with a person-centred approach to care. Unlike people or patients in a hospital setting, residents in nursing homes consider these environments their homes, where care should be delivered in a way that respects their autonomy, choices, and dignity. Person-centred care focuses on treating individuals holistically, recognising their personal values, life experiences, and social connections rather than solely addressing medical needs. By using the term resident, we reinforce the philosophy that care in nursing homes should be compassionate, relationship-based, and tailored to the unique preferences of each individual. This approach ensures that nursing care is not just about clinical interventions but also about promoting well-being, quality of life, and meaningful engagement in a home-like environment.

Who is this for:

This document is intended for:

- Nurses working in nursing homes;
- nurses working towards or undertaking additional education to progress their careers;
- resident and/or resident representatives;
- student nurses in preparation for practice placement or prospective employment;
- individuals in organisations who play a role in recruiting, managing, delivering and assuring the quality of governance processes and service delivery within a nursing home;
- professional organisations, policy makers and commissioners; and
- those who have a role in educating, supervising and supporting nurses in nursing homes.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND BEHAVIOURS FOR A STAFF NURSE

The Nursing Home Staff Nurse delivers safe, effective, compassionate person-centred care in collaboration with members of the multi-disciplinary team to residents and those important to them. This includes the promotion of health, the prevention of illness, clinical assessment and the care of ill, disabled and dying people[4]. Through their professional practice, nurses will demonstrate equality, inclusivity, advocacy, respect for the dignity of others, individual choice and human rights[5].

The image provides a guide on how the pillars of practice are weighted for this job role.

4 World Health Organisation - Health Topics - Nursing (who.int)
5 Our EDI aims - The Nursing and Midwifery Council (nmc.org.uk)

CLINICAL PRACTICE

KEY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS

Ability to

- Promote and deliver safe, effective and person-centred care in collaboration with the multi-disciplinary team (MDT) managing long-term conditions or deterioration in the health of residents
- Foster effective collaboration with the multidisciplinary team, residents and those important to them
- Use of critical thinking, analysis and evaluation skills to make justifiable and timely clinical decisions, utilising a range of appropriate information and sources
- Holistically assess, plan, implement or delegate care/ interventions and evaluate effectiveness in partnership with residents
- Raise and escalate concerns and/or report incidents in accordance with local reporting policies, procedures and professional standards[6]
- Develop and apply clinical knowledge, skills and behaviours, ensuring they are current and appropriate to residents
- Implement fundamental nursing practices, whilst considering residents' diverse needs and frailty, considering their co-morbidities and long-term care needs
- Use and adapt a range of strategies to role model empathic, compassionate interpersonal and communication skills to effectively and appropriately enable interactions with residents and those important to them
- Promote values-based decision making
- Demonstrate the use of technology and information systems and resources available in order to deliver quality care
- Provide and share information effectively utilising a recognised communication tool for a range of situations and contexts to maximise effectiveness, safety and continuity of care e.g. safety huddles/ handovers
- Act and influence others to incorporate non-judgemental, values-based care into practice demonstrating equality, equity, diversity and inclusion3
- Identify and implement health promotion and health protection initiatives for residents
- Advocate for and actively engage with residents living in the Nursing Home and their families
- Maintain and apply knowledge of relevant guidance, policies and legislation that govern legal and ethical aspects of service provision
- Contribute to creating a safe and homely environment that enhances quality of life for residents
- Demonstrate thorough understanding and application of safeguarding and mental capacity legislation as required
- Foster a healthful culture within the nursing home.

6 Enabling professionalism -The Nursing and Midwifery Council (nmc.org.uk)

EDUCATION & LEARNING — KEY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS

Ability to

- Accept responsibility for their own professional development and the maintenance of professional competence and NMC revalidation[7]
- Successfully complete a preceptorship programme[8].
- Engage in a range of learning activities and reflective supervision to improve care and practice
- Engage in appraisal processes and the development and implementation of a Personal Development Plan (PDP) to ensure continuous professional development in order to facilitate career development and progression
- Facilitate learning and development by providing feedback, mentoring, buddying role-modelling, motivating and encouraging others
- Apply the evidence-based skills of facilitation, teaching, assessment, shared learning and development to ensure best practice standards
- Contribute to the supervision and assessment of pre-registration and post-registration nurses
- Act as a supervisor/assessor for students and staff to facilitate learning

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT — KEY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS

Ability to

- Develop personal leadership and management abilities specific to role by:
  - gaining insight into self and own behaviours through reflective practice
  - practice self-care to sustain optimal well-being enabling safe and effective care
  - obtaining, analysing and acting on feedback from a variety of sources for example internal and external to the organisation
  - demonstrating compassionate leadership
  - demonstrating skills in motivating, influencing and negotiation
  - role modelling professional ethics, values and best practice as per NMC Code
  - Recognise, value, respect and promote equality and diversity to build a person-centred and healthful culture[9]

7 Revalidation - The Nursing and Midwifery Council (nmc.org.uk)
8 NI Preceptorship Framework 2022 | NIPEC (hscni.net)
9 https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/doh-nm-vision-leaflet.pdf

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT CONTINUED

KEY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS

Ability to

- Demonstrate accountability for own practice
- Appropriately delegate others in accordance with regional framework guidelines[10] and organisational governance arrangements[11]
- Actively seek opportunities to influence local policies, guidelines, and protocols while contributing to initiatives to enhance nursing practice and care delivery
- Following completion of induction and preceptorship, promote, support and act as the link nurse for specialised areas of nursing home practice
- Following completion of induction and preceptorship, seek opportunities to become a mentor, preceptor, practice assessor and/or practice supervisor
- Communicate effectively across a variety of channels to ensure accessibility and inclusivity
- Seek, receive and provide feedback in an open, honest and constructive manner
- Identify and analyse problems and work collaboratively to implement solutions
- Respond proactively to concerns by addressing or escalating as per organisational policy and professional guidance
- Demonstrate the ability to practice both independently and in collaboration with others
- Contribute to the effective and efficient management of resources, having awareness of budgetary constraints and needs of the service
- Understand the importance of effective staffing levels in meeting safe, person-centred care. Recognise when and how to raise concerns in relation to staffing levels.
- Demonstrate awareness of care standards for nursing homes and implement improvement plans to improve practice and quality
- Contribute to a safe, inclusive and healthful culture that learns from and responds to risk as per organisational governance arrangements
- Give support and guidance to colleagues to enable personal and professional development
- Complete an individualised person-centred risk assessment as appropriate that focuses on the needs of the person living in the nursing home and those important to them to implement a plan of care.
- Implement and promote safeguarding policies and procedures[12]
- Demonstrate the ability to lead a team utilising the Collective Leadership Framework for Nursing and Midwifery[13]

10 NIPEC-Delegation-Decision-Framework-Jan-2019 | NIPEC (hscni.net)
11 https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/code/code-in-action/delegation/
12 Safeguarding Adults Core Competency Framework
13 A Collective Leadership Framework for Nursing and Midwifery

RESEARCH & EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE

KEY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS

Ability to

- Search appropriate databases, identifying current and valid evidence to inform person-centred practice
- Adhere to research governance, including Good Clinical Practice, ethics, data protection and confidentiality
- Identify ideas for service improvement and share these with your line manager
- Participate in Quality Improvement, clinical audit and contribute to research activity informing practice[14], [15]
- Disseminate emerging good practice and learning e.g. from risk reporting systems, serious adverse incidents, audit, research and quality improvement activity

14 Quality 2020
15 Nursing and Midwifery Task Group (NMTG) Report & Recommendations

PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION, EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

Minimum Professional Registration & Education Level & Experience

Staff Nurse

A relevant nursing qualification and NMC registration in any field of nursing is required.

Staff Nurses in Nursing Homes should complete a preceptorship programme if this is their first post-registration job along with an induction programme. Staff Nurses who have completed a preceptorship programme in another organisation should complete an induction programme. Staff nurses should demonstrate ongoing professional development to enhance their skills to maintain competence.

To support their growth, coaching, mentoring, and reflective supervision provide valuable opportunities to develop clinical expertise, leadership, and management capabilities in the complex and autonomous environment of nursing home care.

The nursing home staff nurse will participate in the following:

- Mandatory training;
- Continuous professional development;
- Reflective Supervision with access to peer support and professional networks relevant to the role;
- Preceptorship processes;
- Induction;
- Link nurse programmes;
- Local and national initiatives;
- Management and leadership development;
- Quality Improvement initiatives; and
- Practice Supervisor / Practice Assessor for Nursing and Midwifery students and support for other learners.

Additional Learning and Development Opportunities

Access to coaching and reflective supervision will help Staff Nurses develop their clinical, management and leadership skills.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND BEHAVIOURS FOR

SISTER/CHARGE NURSE

The Sister/Charge Nurse delivers autonomous and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups and communities, sick or well and in all settings. This includes the promotion of health, the prevention of illness, and the care of ill, disabled and dying people. Through their professional practice nurses will demonstrate equality, inclusivity, respect for the dignity of others, individual choice and human rights. The Sister/Charge Nurse demonstrates leadership and management responsibilities, supporting and deputising for the manager of the nursing home.

N.B. This role also applies to those in Team Leader/Clinical Lead roles or others practicing at a similar level.

The image provides a guide on how the pillars of practice are weighted for this job role.

CLINICAL PRACTICE

KEY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS

Ability to

- Demonstrate accountability and responsibility to lead the delivery of safe, effective and person-centred care as part of the multi-disciplinary team
- Use skills of critical analysis, evaluation and effective management to make justifiable and timely clinical decisions, utilising a range of appropriate information and resources
- Holistically assess, plan, implement or direct complex care/interventions and evaluate effectiveness
- Apply and continue to develop specialist clinical knowledge, skills and behaviours which are appropriate and specific to nursing homes
- Utilise an advanced level of communication skills and strategies to communicate across relevant multidisciplinary teams/multiagency when dealing with complex issues
- Select and use technology-enabled care alongside available information systems to both inform and support practice
- Use available technology-enabled care alongside information systems to collect, analyse and share complex information effectively and concisely for a range of situations and contexts to ensure safety and continuity of care
- Promote and influence others to incorporate non-judgemental, values-based care into practice demonstrating equality, equity, diversity and inclusion
- Identify and implement the principles of health promotion and health protection that may influence a range of health inequalities and patterns of health, through use of appropriate resources including health literacy
- Advocate for and actively engage with people, families, carers and communities
- Apply and ensure adherence to relevant guidance5, policies and legislation that govern legal and ethical aspects of service provision and embed these into practice
- Lead and support the implementation of local polices, guidelines and protocols, ensuring they reflect national policy, legislation and current evidence
- Monitor and maintain health, safety and security of self and others by adhering to health and safety legislation and policies
- Escalate and/or respond to concerns and/or incidents in accordance with local reporting policies, procedures and professional standards
- Ensure completion of person-centred risk assessments and implementation of plans of care.

EDUCATION & LEARNING

KEY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS

Ability to

- Role model accountability for own professional development and the maintenance of professional knowledge, skills and behaviours and NMC revalidation.
- Engage in, support and facilitate a range of learning activities and reflective supervision to improve care and practice in self and others
- Ensure continuous professional development of self and others through appraisal and personal development planning processes
- Create an effective and supportive environment that ensures learning opportunities for others
- Facilitate learning and development by role-modelling, motivating and encouraging others
- Apply the evidence-based skills of facilitation, teaching, assessment and development to ensure best practice standards
- Supervise and assess pre-registration and post-registration nurses
- Supervise and support the development of non-registered healthcare/nursing staff
- Support and develop new team members and colleagues
- Engage in learning needs analyses, educational audit and evaluation of educational interventions
- Implement lessons learned from audit, adverse incidents and complaints

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

KEY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS

Ability to

- Utilise the Collective Leadership Framework for Nursing and Midwifery to assess, develop and demonstrate leadership capabilities through:
  - gaining self-insight and understanding of one's own behaviours through reflective practice and acting on feedback
  - demonstrating compassionate leadership
  - demonstrating skills in motivating, influencing and negotiation
  - role modelling professional ethics, values and best practice as per NMC Code
  - valuing and promoting equality and diversity
  - respectful practice ensuring a culture of inclusion
- Demonstrate accountability for own professional practice and hold others to account as per NMC Code
- Identify, address and report underperformance as per organisational policy

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT CONTINUED

KEY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS

- Appropriately manage and delegate to others in accordance with regional framework guidelines[11] and organisational governance arrangements
- Communicate complex information at an appropriate level to a range of audiences, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity
- Actively promote a supportive and just culture, where constructive feedback is received positively and regarded as a learning opportunity
- Display creativity and innovation in exploring and implementing possible solutions to problems and evaluating their effectiveness
- Respond proactively and support others to take responsibility for ensuring concerns are addressed in a timely manner, applying relevant policies and professional guidance
- Ensure the effective and efficient management of resources, having knowledge of budgetary constraints and needs of the service
- Demonstrate the ability to use recognised workload assessment and skill mix to ensure safe and effective person-centred care
- Recognise, monitor, and implement suitable processes to improve safe and effective staffing levels, ensuring the provision of person-centred care, raising concerns and escalating as per organisational policy
- Utilise local governance structures, frameworks and policy to improve care
- Provide leadership to support quality improvement and service enhancement
- Promote and manage a safe, inclusive and healthful culture[10] that learns from and responds to risk as per organisational governance arrangements
- Support staff to safeguard residents in line with the Regional Protocol and assist in oversight of protection plans and supervision of staff
- Recognise when to escalate concerns and invoke whistleblowing procedures.
- Contribute to workforce development through personal and professional development of individuals and teams aligned to organisational priorities
- Demonstrate leadership behaviours when managing people, adhering to organisational human resource policies and processes.
- Demonstrate collaborative leadership skills to support and lead the implementation of the business continuity plan.

RESEARCH & EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE

KEY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS

Ability to

- Demonstrate the ability to search, critically appraise and evaluate evidence to inform person-centred practice
- Promote adherence to research governance, ethics, data protection and confidentiality
- Identify, support and assist in the implementation of ideas for service improvement
- Enable and contribute to Quality Improvement projects and initiatives, clinical audit and research activity which informs person-centred practice[13,14]
- Disseminate and implement good practice and learning emerging from audit, research and quality improvement activities to enhance practice and resident experience[14,16]

16 5 Principles to Improve the Patient Experience (hbr.org)

PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION, EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

Minimum Professional Registration & Education Level & Experience

Sister/Charge Nurse

A relevant nursing qualification and NMC registration in any field of nursing is required.

If the nurse in this role has progressed within the Nursing Home their educational requirements will be in addition to the educational requirements outlined in the previous job role.

The Sister/Charge Nurse will undertake additional learning and development activities relevant to their area of expertise to develop their knowledge and skills in clinical practice and other areas such as, leadership, quality improvement, research and development; this is not an exhaustive list.

As a new sister/charge nurse of the nursing home, the sister/charge nurse, in collaboration with the manager, maps their educational background against previous job roles to identify any additional educational requirements.

Access to coaching and reflective supervision will help further develop their clinical, management and leadership skills.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND BEHAVIOURS FOR

DEPUTY NURSE MANAGER

The Deputy Nurse Manager is the most senior clinical nurse role. The Deputy Nurse Manager is pivotal in linking the delivery of high standards of nursing care with the operational functioning of the nursing home. The Deputy Nurse Manager leads and manages the nursing team and supports the Nursing Home Manager across all departments of the Home acting in the place of the Nursing Home Manager as required.

The image provides a guide on how the pillars of practice are weighted for this job role.

CLINICAL PRACTICE — KEY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS

Ability to

- Provide expert clinical care, proficiency and advice on safe, effective, person-centred care
- Use person-centred assessment skills to determine a resident's holistic needs, utilising evidence-based tools to inform decision-making.
- Co-produce care plans with residents and those important to them and develop therapeutic relationships that promote informed decision-making.
- Supervise the delivery of co-produced care plans by the care team, ensuring regular care evaluation.
- Undertake a holistic pre-admission assessment of a prospective resident.
- Demonstrate ability to make decisions on the suitability of residents for admission to the nursing home in line with the category of registration.
- Advocate for residents' choice, regarding Emergency Department attendance and hospital admissions, recognising the role of advance care planning and anticipatory prescribing.
- Support your team in making a timely referral to the MDT, as necessary, whilst maintaining overall management and care coordination responsibility.
- Ensure clear lines of accountability regarding delegation, supervision, and mechanisms for ensuring clinical governance.
- Develop and implement person-centred risk assessment and management strategies that consider people's views and responsibilities and promote individual safeguarding.

EDUCATION & LEARNING — KEY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS

Ability to

- Accept responsibility for continuous professional development, professional competence, and NMC revalidation.
- Support, role model and promote the value of CPD, professional competence and NMC revalidation.
- Engage and promote learning activities and reflective supervision to improve resident care and practice.
- Lead and support the induction and onboarding of new staff, ensuring they are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed for both digital and non-digital record keeping, and are integrated into the team with confidence.

EDUCATION & LEARNING CONTINUED

KEY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS

- Supervise and support staff using a strengths-based approach.
- Understand and apply the principles of human factors, environmental influences, and strength-based approaches in team settings. [17]
- Facilitate appraisals, Personal Development Plans, and promote completion of mandatory and job-specific training with the team.
- Identify and participate in developing, delivering, and evaluating educational initiatives that address residents' needs.
- Cultivate and promote a positive teaching and learning environment that develops the capability and capacity of nursing home staff, and supports residents to make informed decisions about their care.
- Undertake post-incident analysis and disseminate learning and implement relevant actions to facilitate the delivery of safe, effective, person-centred care.
- Safety briefs and Health & Safety Meetings are examples of where learning can be shared.
- Promote and support accurate, timely, and person-centred record keeping by all staff, whether using digital or paper-based systems.
- Lead and support the induction and onboarding of new staff, ensuring they are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed for both digital and non-digital record keeping, and are integrated into the team with confidence.
- Participate and contribute to local, regional and national clinical forums and/or professional and strategic groups.
- Promote and support accurate, timely, and person-centred record keeping by all staff, whether using digital or paper-based systems.
- Provide training and support to ensure all team members are confident in the required methods, and foster ongoing improvement in documentation practices.

17 Human factors: environmental, organisational and job factors, and human and individual characteristics, which influence behaviour at work in a way which can affect health and safety. Strength-based approaches: Strength-based practice is a collaborative process between staff and leadership, working together to achieve an outcome that leverages the individual's strengths and assets.

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

KEY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS

Ability to

- Promote and champion the value and unique contribution of the care home nursing within the care team.
- Apply the relevant nursing home legislation, standards, guidance, and strategies to enable the provision of a person-centred, responsive service.
- Use quality improvement initiatives to promote and support service improvement, enhancement, evaluation and innovation.
- Champion/advocate and actively interact with residents and those important to them needing nursing home care, as demonstrated by leading meetings for residents and their relatives.
- Promote and model effective teamwork through collective leadership, to problem-solve, and foster a caring, healthful culture, creating a safe and supportive environment.
- Manage the nursing home team's resources through effective and efficient allocation and monitoring.
- Lead, manage, and monitor the resident care, delegating for safe, effective, person-centred care.
- Participate in developing, implementing, and monitoring policies, procedures, and protocols while identifying when updates are necessary to reflect changes in guidance as per evidence-based practice.
- Demonstrate effective performance management of staff utilising organisational policies and procedures.
- Lead and foster a healthful culture of openness, recognising a duty of candour and acting on concerns raised.
- Develop personal resilience to manage the demands and challenges of leading and managing the nursing home team and use appropriate organisational support systems.
- Collaborate with the nursing home team to assess current practices, identify service gaps, develop effective solutions, and implement initiatives to improve care quality.
- Collaborate with the Home Manager on recruitment processes, including interviewing and selection, to ensure a comprehensive and welcoming induction experience for new staff, facilitating integration into the team.
- Support and promote staff well-being initiatives that help build resilience, recognising the importance of a healthy and motivated workforce.

RESEARCH & EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE

Key Knowledge, Skills, Behaviours

Ability to

- Critically appraise research and available evidence to enhance the quality, safety, and effectiveness of person-centred care in the nursing home.
- Foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation by engaging staff in quality improvement initiatives and evidence-based practices, while leading and sharing findings from audits and research to inform decision-making and enhance service development.
- Engage with a broad range of stakeholders-including residents, those important to them, staff, external professionals, and regulatory bodies to gather feedback, share learning, and ensure that service improvements reflect the needs and experiences of those using and delivering care.
- Utilise specialist knowledge to identify gaps in service provision, develop solutions, and implement initiatives that enhance care quality and resident outcomes.

PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION, EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

Minimum Professional Registration & Education Level & Experience

Deputy Nurse Manager

A valid nursing qualification and current NMC registration in any field of nursing is essential.

As a new deputy manager who has progressed within the nursing home, in collaboration with the manager, they will map their educational background against previous job roles to identify any additional educational requirements.

The Deputy Nurse Manager will actively engage in additional relevant learning and development.

As a new Deputy Nurse Manager of the nursing home, the DNM, in collaboration with the manager, maps their educational background against previous job roles to identify any additional educational requirements.

The Deputy Nurse Manager will play a pivotal role in supporting the Nursing Home Manager and providing high-quality clinical leadership within the home.

As part of their ongoing development, the Deputy Nurse Manager will be expected to engage with the NIPEC Learning and Development Matrix, contributing to succession planning and preparing for potential future leadership roles.

The Deputy Nurse Manager develops and implements a Personal Development Plan (PDP) should be in place, focusing on maintaining clinical practice, enhancing management knowledge, and promoting best practice across all areas of care.

The Deputy Nurse Manager will:

- Participate in available leadership development initiatives to enhance your leadership capabilities, service improvement, and strategic thinking within the nursing home environment.
- Participate in available programs focused on building essential skills to drive positive change and improve the quality of care provided.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND BEHAVIOURS FOR

NURSING HOME MANAGER

The Nursing Home Manager is the most senior nurse within the home and is responsible for the day to day functioning of all departments. The Nurse Manager is required to be registered with RQIA and the NMC and contributes significantly to the stability of the home and the delivery of safe and effective care. They set a high standard for leadership and management across the Home, promoting key values in their team and enabling care which aims to meet the expectation of residents and those important to them. The Nursing home manager collaborates to oversee the services operation, supporting staff in their roles promoting high standards of care and compliance with regulatory requirements, and contributing to decisions that guide the ongoing development and sustainability of the nursing home.

The image provides a guide on how the pillars of practice are weighted for this job role.

CLINICAL PRACTICE — KEY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS

Ability to

- Continue to develop their level of clinical expertise to support, advise and guide their team, contributing to both individual and collective learning.
- Demonstrate and promote the unique contribution of nursing within the nursing home sector.
- Foster an open and just learning culture where feedback is welcomed and used constructively to enhance care.
- Lead implementation of lessons learned from incidents and work collectively with the team to embed improvements in practice.
- Supports residents, and those important to them, and staff to make informed decisions in complex situations, applying critical thinking and professional judgement to manage risk.
- Leads the development of quality indicators and involves the team in monitoring, assessing and improving standards of care.
- Champion alignment of practice with professional, ethical and legal frameworks (e.g. NMC Code, Nursing Home Standards).

EDUCATION & LEARNING — KEY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS

Ability to

- Acts as a role model in professionalism, inspiring colleagues to uphold and develop nursing standards.
- Encourages shared learning opportunities across the team, linking education to improved resident outcomes.
- Supports and promotes colleagues in recognising the need for lifelong learning and engages in reflective practice and clinical supervision.
- Lead on the development structured induction and maintain oversight of the process, ensuring that mentorship and coaching is available to support staff and students.
- Identifies skill gaps and contributes to workforce planning by ensuring training and development programmes meet residents' care needs.

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT — KEY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS

Ability to

- Is responsible for promoting safe, effective and compassionate service delivery.
- Leads authentically and compassionately, treating all staff and residents with dignity, respect and sensitivity.
- Builds strong, collaborative teams with clear roles, shared purpose and mutual trust.
- Promotes co-production, valuing and incorporating the perspectives of staff, residents and those important to them in service design and improvement.
- Provides and oversees clinical supervision and uses feedback mechanisms to foster staff development and high-quality care.
- Maintains oversight of HR processes, including recruitment, retention, workforce planning and performance development.
- Works in partnership with a range of external stakeholders and partners, promoting compliance while continuously driving quality improvement.
- Demonstrate control and oversight of the budget, working within organisational boundaries to meet financial targets and maintain operational viability.

RESEARCH & EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE — KEY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS

Ability to

- Create links between practice, evidence and research, encouraging staff to apply evidence-based best practice guidelines in daily care.
- Responsible for integrating clinical governance into practice, to enhance resident outcomes, safety and contribute to the overall effectiveness of care.
- Use audit, quality improvement and research methods to review and enhance service delivery.
- Encourage and facilitate staff engagement in service improvement initiatives, embedding feedback from residents and those important to them in decision-making.
- Actively share learning, research outcomes and innovative practice within the organisation and with external partners.
- Facilitate collaborative links between clinical practice and research through proactive engagement, networking with academic, clinical and other active researchers.
- Lead the exploration of market research opportunities related to service provision, identifying opportunities to further support the needs of the local population.
- Oversee marketing of the Nursing Home to promote public perception and embedding the Nursing Home within the local community.

PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION, EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

A recognised nursing qualification and current NMC registration are essential. The Nursing Home Manager is required to complete the RQIA registration process.

The Nursing Home Manager should contribute to succession planning and preparing for potential future leadership roles.

The educational requirements of a new Nursing Home Manager who has progressed within a Nursing Home organisation will be in addition to the educational requirements outlined in the previous job role.

A Nursing Home Manager who is new to the nursing home setting should, in collaboration with their line manager, maps their educational background against previous job roles to identify any additional educational requirements.

The Nursing Home Manager can also undertake additional learning and development activities relevant to their area of expertise to develop their knowledge and skills in clinical practice and other areas such as, leadership, quality improvement, research and development; this is not an exhaustive list.

The Nursing Home Manager develops and implements a Personal Development Plan (PDP) to ensure continuous professional development.

The Nursing Home Manager will:

- participate in available leadership development initiatives to enhance your leadership capabilities, service improvement, and strategic thinking within the nursing home environment.
- Participate in available programs focused on building essential skills to drive positive change and improve the quality of care provided.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND BEHAVIOURS FOR

REGIONAL NURSE MANAGER

The Regional Nurse Manager, referred to as the Regional Manager, may be responsible for a number of Nursing Homes within the organisation and may also be responsible for Residential Homes. They provide a high standard of leadership and management through supporting and enabling others whilst maintaining focus on total quality management, governance, oversight, maintaining regulatory standards and compliance.
The Regional Manager is key in the development of teams, seeking opportunities for colleagues to develop as part of workforce planning.

It is noted that not all Regional Managers are required by legislation to be registered nurses. However, this career pathway has been developed for nurses who perform this role. The image provides a guide on how the pillars of practice are weighted for this job role.

CLINICAL PRACTICE — KEY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS

Ability to

- provide oversight of care quality standards in line with regulatory requirements.
- Identify best practices and facilitate their implementation across an organisation. Lead and/or support the development of enhanced care models for individuals with complex needs.
- Maintain continuity of operational oversight to foster high standards of resident care, staff support, and regulatory compliance. This will include forming a professional judgement regarding the standard of care provided in the nursing home through monthly Reg 29 visits.
- Support the use, assessment, and review of competency frameworks within the organisation.

EDUCATION & LEARNING — KEY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS

Ability to

- Lead and deliver continuous quality/service improvement programmes.
- Provide leadership, mentorship, coaching and professional development to nursing home managers to promote effective and capable leadership.
- Facilitate communication within the organisation about external CPD programmes, ensuring that staff at all levels are informed of appropriate opportunities for professional development.
- Collaborate with nursing home managers to facilitate succession planning and leadership development within their teams, thereby developing and growing competent future nursing home leaders.
- Develop structured learning pathways, including leadership development and career progression opportunities.
- Foster and role model compassionate leadership to inspire and create healthful cultures in the nursing homes.
- Facilitate access to training that links environmental sustainability with improved health outcomes for residents and staff.
- Promote understanding of how sustainable practices contribute to therapeutic, safe and healthful care environments.

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

KEY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS

Ability to

- Provide leadership and oversight for action planning in response to identified underperformance or risks, ensuring timely and effective interventions to address issues and mitigate potential impacts.
- Provide strategic leadership in the management of adverse incidents, SAIs, and complex investigations.
- Build and lead high-performing teams.
- Provide strategic leadership and direction to Home Managers.
- Drive consistent operational performance aligned with organisational goals and values.
- Demonstrate integrity, accountability and compassion to inspire a culture of excellence that promotes person-centred practice.
- Collaborate with nursing home managers to lead operational sustainability and ensure the long-term viability of the homes.
- Support Home Managers to achieve key performance indicators that drive quality/service improvement.
- Foster and sustain collaborative partnerships with residents and those important to them, staff, as well as commissioners and local stakeholders.
- Provides strategic leadership to integrate sustainability into operational planning and service delivery.
- Supports implementation of practical initiatives that reduce environmental impact and strengthen organisational resilience.
- Champions a culture where environmentally responsible practice is seen as integral to high-quality, person-centred care, including its co-health benefits.

RESEARCH & EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE

KEY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS

Ability to

- Provide oversight of the organisational operations to maintain the highest standards of service and regulatory compliance while driving sustainability and ensuring the long-term viability of the nursing homes.
- Drive a culture of continuous improvement, clinical excellence, and early risk identification.
- Lead the triangulation and analysis of performance data (e.g., complaints, incidents, SAIs) to identify emerging risks.
- Promote a culture where nursing teams use data thoughtfully to assess risks and guide compassionate, person-centred practice decisions.
- Monitor the effectiveness of education, learning and development programmes, using governance data to inform improvements.
- Lead the planning and delivery of new nursing services, securing regulatory approvals, managing implementation plans, and ensuring the timely launch of facilities to meet patient-centred care needs.
- Represent the organisation at local and regional level, providing specialist guidance relating to nursing homes.
- Uses organisational data and emerging evidence to identify sustainability improvements that also enhance resident wellbeing and service efficiency.
- Evaluates the impact of sustainability initiatives and shares learning across homes.
- Encourages the adoption of innovations that deliver measurable environmental and co-health benefits while maintaining regulatory compliance.

EDUCATION

The Regional Manager is required to hold a valid nursing qualification and be registered with the NMC in any field of nursing.

The educational requirements of a new Regional Nurse Manager who has progressed within a Nursing Home organisation will be in addition to the educational requirements outlined in the previous job role.

A Regional Manager who is new to the nursing home setting should, in collaboration with their line manager, maps their educational background against previous job roles to identify any additional educational requirements.

The Regional Manager can also undertake additional learning and development activities relevant to their area of expertise to develop their knowledge and skills in clinical practice and other areas such as, leadership, quality improvement, research and development; this is not an exhaustive list.

The Regional Manager develops and implements a Personal Development Plan (PDP) to ensure continuous professional development.

Nursing Home Specific Resources Considered

- Queens Nursing Institute - Standards-of-Education-and-Practice-for-Nurses-New-to-Care-Home-Nursing-2021.pdf
- Adult care home manager | Social Care Wales

APPENDIX ONE

Project Steering Group Membership

Name	Organisation
Daniel Oliveira (Co-chair) ^ x	CWC Group
Gary Cousins (Co-chair) ^ x	NIPEC
Brenda Rushe (Co-chair, Competency & Education Sub-group) ^	Royal College of Nursing
Dr Gary Mitchell (Co-chair, Competency & Education Sub-group) ^	Queens University Belfast
Sarah Penny (Co-chair, Communication & Engagement Sub-group) x	Ulster University
Sophie Lennon (Co-chair, Communication & Engagement Sub-group) x	Healthcare Ireland
Una St. Ledger x	The Open University
Fionnuala Gallagher ^	Department of Health – Nursing Officer
Jane McMillan	Department of Health – Professional Social Work Officer
Professor Claire Pryor ^	University of Salford/RCN Foundation Chair in Adult Social Care Nursing
Dr Agnes Fanning ^	The Queen's Institute of Community Nursing
Dr Zena Aldridge	National Institute for Health and Care Research

Name	Organisation
Caroline Lecky ^	Public Health Agency
Jane Moore	Faith House Care Home
Linda Graham ^	Spa Nursing Group
Valerie Atcheson	Seaview House Care Home
Stephanie Craig x	RCN Independent Sector Network
Kayleigh Hunniford	Owen Mor Care Home
Sharon Smyth ^	Hutchinson Care Homes
Gillian McAleer ^	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
Elizabeth Graham	Northern Health and Social Care Trust
Julie Foster x	Northern Health and Social Care Trust
Aileen Mulligan ^	Southern Health and Social Care Trust
Helen McConnell (replaced by Briege McGranaghan) ^	Western Health and Social Care Trust
Emma Magill ^	South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
Graham Divine ^	Clinical Education Centre
Kieran McCormick	NIPEC Council

^ Denotes membership of the Education and Competency Sub-group in addition to the Project Steering Group.
x Denotes membership of the Engagement and Communication Sub-group in addition to the Project Steering Group.

NIPEC

Northern Ireland Practice
& Education Council