

RCN Competences



Royal College
of Nursing

RCN competences for nurses assessing and counselling women who request and/or receive long-acting reversible methods of contraception (LARC)





Acknowledgements

The RCN would like to thank:

- **The Associate Members Working Group** – Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare (RCOG)
- **Wendy Moore** – Clinical Service Manager/Nurse Specialist – Contraception and Sexual Health, Wolverhampton
- **Su Everett** – Senior Nurse Practitioner, Kings College Foundation Hospital and Senior Lecturer, Middlesex University, London
- **Kate Sanders** – Practice Development Facilitator, Foundation of Nursing Studies (FONS)
- **Catriona Sutherland** – Nurse Adviser
- **Julie Hyde** – Independent Education Consultant
- **Shelley Mehigan** – Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- **Ann Eady** – Margaret Pyke Centre, London
- **Mary Robinson** – Margaret Pyke Centre, London
- **Jenny Greenfield** – Lead Nurse Cervical Screening Improvement, NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald NHS Hastings and Rother
- **Melanie Little** – Family Planning Clinic, Erne Hospital, Enniskillen, Northern Ireland.

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Published by the Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, London, W1G 0RN

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RCN competences:

for nurses assessing and counselling women who request and/or receive long-acting reversible methods of contraception (LARC)

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Introduction

The changing context of care delivery

In recent years, services providing sexual and reproductive health care have identified the need for more nurses to gain skills in assessing and counselling women who request or receive long-acting, reversible methods of contraception (LARC). LARC contraceptive methods include:

- intrauterine devices (IUDs)
- intrauterine systems (IUSs)
- subdermal contraceptive implants (SDIs).

Nurses providing sexual and reproductive health care are now increasingly extending their role, benefitting both the nurses and their client groups. Clients are offered more choices about how they want to receive care. Nurses who support women in choosing contraception, and who have had specialist training to insert contraceptive devices and/or implants, often provide these services independently at the point of delivery, while also being part of a multi-professional team.

Purpose and scope of the RCN competency framework

Competence can be defined as: *‘The state of having the knowledge, judgement, skills, energy, experience and motivation required to respond adequately to the demands of one’s professional responsibilities’* (Roach, 1992).

These Royal College of Nursing (RCN) competences have been derived from the RCN accreditation documents:

- *Inserting and removing subdermal contraceptive implants – accreditation and training guidance* (RCN, 2010, fourth edition)
- *Intrauterine techniques – accreditation and training guidance* (RCN, 2010, fourth edition).

The competences represent current best practice. They were developed by RCN members in consultation with stakeholders and were mapped against the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework and other relevant professional standards.

The purpose of this competency framework is to ensure that women requiring counselling and delivery of contraceptive solutions are cared for safely. Such services are not delivered in isolation, and the competences link to the RCN’s Sexual health competences (2009) and Pelvic bimanual examination competences (2011).

The RCN competency framework can be used to:

- help all professionals to identify their training needs
- ensure nurses have the skills and knowledge to undertake counselling for, and delivery of, contraceptive services competently and safely
- provide a basis for assessing competency
- inform the commissioning, development and delivery of education and training.

The competences are intended to be applicable in the four UK countries. They are not exhaustive, and nurses should ensure that they take into account local governance, policy and training requirements.

RCN competences for assessing and counselling women requesting/receiving long-acting reversible methods of contraception *intrauterine devices (IUDs), intrauterine systems (IUSs) or subdermal contraceptive implants (SDIs)*

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Caring for women requesting intrauterine techniques or subdermal contraceptive implants

Level	Competence	KSF	Performance criteria	Knowledge and understanding	Attitudes and behaviours	Contextual factors
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses the consultation process with women requesting IUD/IUS or SDI 	HWB4 Core 1 IK1 HWB5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapts consultation style to suit woman's understanding, culture, background and preferred way of communicating Respects women's dignity, wishes and beliefs, involves them in shared decision-making and obtains their consent Keeps accurate and complete records of activities and communications consistent with legislation, policies and procedures Informs other health care providers (e.g. GPs) appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of the stages in the consultation process Understanding of concepts of accountability, responsibility and informed consent NMC Code and its principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitive to issues relating to culture, age and other factors Maintains confidentiality appropriately Appreciates need to ensure informed consent Commitment to accuracy Consults with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills for Health HSC414, HSC434 Skills for Health CHS167 NMC (2009) <i>Record keeping</i> NMC (2008d) <i>The code</i>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assesses and counsels women requesting an IUD/IUS or an SDI 	HWB 1, 2 Core 1 HWB 6, 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates skills in taking a sexual history Demonstrates skills in taking an appropriate medical history Uses UK Medical Eligibility Criteria to assess suitability of method for individual women Uses FSRH Guidance documents for IUTs and SDIs to guide practice Understands the significance and need for assessment, investigation and management of potential IUD/IUS and SDI users with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> heavy and painful periods infrequent and absent periods vaginal discharge and STIs acute and chronic pain Identifies the physiological, psychological, social, cultural, developmental, sexual and spiritual needs of the woman when planning care Inquires about the woman's own knowledge and understanding of her needs, condition, options and their consequences Challenges incorrect understanding sensitively Provides accurate information clearly and customised to the woman's expressed needs, including the mode of action, side effects, benefits, risks, efficacy rates and follow up plans Demonstrates the consultation skills to offer the option of an emergency IUD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> History-taking Knowledge of composition and pharmacokinetics of IUD/IUS and SDIs Knowledge of risks and benefits of use of IUD/IUS/SDI Knowledge of advised follow-up care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitive to needs and understanding of the woman Sensitive to issues relating to culture, age, learning disabilities and other factors Utilises knowledge base in practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills for Health HSC414 FSRH (2007) RCN (2008)

Caring for women requesting intrauterine techniques or subdermal contraceptive implants (continued)

Level	Competence	KSF	Performance criteria	Knowledge and understanding	Attitudes and behaviours	Contextual factors
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently adheres to the legal framework surrounding the examination and provision of contraception to a minor 	HWB 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates ability to access competence to provide informed consent Provides information, advice and treatment in line with <i>Fraser Guidelines</i> Demonstrates knowledge of local safeguarding policies and procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and understanding of Fraser Guidelines (1985) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitive to needs of young women Appreciates need to comply with policies, procedures and guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Health (2004) <i>Guidance for Health Professionals on the Provision of Contraceptive Services for Under 16s</i> Fraser Guidelines (1985) Scotland Act (1991) Age of Legal Capacity
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands the risks associated with IUD/IUS/SDI insertion 	HWB7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articulates an understanding of the assessment of STI risks and appropriate investigations Articulates an understanding of the assessment and management of women who have concerns because actinomycosis-like organisms (ALOs) have been reported on their cytology report Excludes possible pregnancy before offering IUT or subdermal implant Ensures necessary emergency equipment is available for inserting IUTs and subdermal contraceptive implants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and understanding of indications/contraindications, side effects and complications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to applying standard precautions drawing on evidence-based protocols and guidelines to minimise treatment risks and side-effects Appreciates need to comply with policies, procedures and guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FSRH (2007) RCN (2008)

Caring for women undergoing insertion of an IUD or IUS

Level	Competence	KSF	Performance criteria	Knowledge and understanding	Attitudes and behaviours	Contextual factors
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares environment/equipment for the insertion of an IUD/IUS 	HWB6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares the environment, taking into account any specific requirements, e.g. ensuring access for women with disabilities Ensures environment enables the maintenance of privacy and dignity for the woman Prepares the equipment required, e.g. ensuring various sizes of speculum are at hand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local policies and procedures including aseptic technique and infection control Equipment required Knowledge and understanding of patient group directions/patient specific directions, if not a non-medical prescriber 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anticipates what is needed in advance of procedure Sensitive to needs of client Appreciates need to comply with policies, procedures and guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills for Health GEN6 Local policies and procedures for aseptic technique and infection control NMC (2008b) <i>Standards for medicines management</i> Local patient group directions Local patient specific directions
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares the client physically and psychologically for the insertion of an IUD/IUS 	HWB6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implements the chaperoning policy using an appropriately trained assistant Explains procedure fully and ensures woman understands procedure (informed consent) Discusses pain relief with woman in advance and administers where appropriate Advises woman on correct position for procedure and offers assistance where appropriate Ensures the privacy and dignity of the woman is maintained at all times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chaperoning policy Confidentiality policy Manual handling techniques Knowledge and understanding of patient group directions/patient specific directions, if not a non-medical prescriber 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains privacy and dignity of women Appreciates need to comply with policies, procedures and guidelines Commitment to evidence based care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local policies on chaperoning Skills for Health GEN4, CHS6 Local manual handling policies Local patient group directions Local patient specific directions
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safely and effectively inserts an IUD/IUS 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses personal protective equipment (PPE) Demonstrates skills in performing a pelvic bi-manual examination Understands the significance and need for assessment, investigation and management of potential IUD/IUS users with abnormal bi-manual examinations Uses aseptic or no-touch technique Demonstrates skills in assessing cervical canal and uterine cavity accurately Shows familiarity with local anaesthetic techniques Demonstrates skills in the use of lower-range cervical dilators Cleanses cervix as per local policy Demonstrates skills with the introducing mechanism and insertion techniques of all current standard devices/systems Demonstrates safe insertion of IUD/IUS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of pelvic anatomy and physiology Local aseptic technique or no-touch technique according to local policies and procedures Knowledge of local anaesthetics and analgesia Knowledge of lower-range cervical dilators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciates need to comply with policies, procedures and guidelines Utilises knowledge base in practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCN <i>competences for nurses undertaking bimanual pelvic examinations</i> (2011) Local aseptic technique policies and procedures Local infection control policies FSRH (2007) RCN (2010) <i>Intrauterine techniques</i>

Caring for women undergoing insertion of an IUD or IUS (continued)

Level	Competence	KSF	Performance criteria	Knowledge and understanding	Attitudes and behaviours	Contextual factors
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safely and effectively manages complications of IUD/IUS insertion including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suspected uterine perforation • anaphylaxis • vasovagal shock • lost threads • pelvic pain • suspected pelvic inflammatory disease. 	HWB 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulates the procedure for managing a suspected uterine perforation • Demonstrates basic airway management and life support skills • Articulates the procedure for managing suspected vasovagal shock and/or demonstrates the procedure for safe administration of IV atropine as appropriate or agreed by local policy • Explains procedures for accessing timely and appropriate assistance • Records and reports significant adverse event according to local policies • Demonstrates ability to ascertain the cause of lost threads • Offers appropriate advice to woman with lost threads • Demonstrates ability to assess pelvic pain in women with an IUD/IUS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of potential complications, and their causes, consequences and appropriate treatments • Knowledge of basic airway management and life support • Knowledge of local policies for reporting adverse events • Knowledge and understanding of patient group directions/patient specific directions, if not a non-medical prescriber 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognises own limitations and seeks appropriate assistance • Appreciates need to comply with policies, procedures and guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills for Health CHS36, EUSC17 • FSRH (2007) • RCN (2008) • Local patient group directions/patient specific directions • Anaphylaxis and resuscitation updates in line with local patient group directions/patient specific directions
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides accurate and appropriate advice about ongoing care 	HWB 3, 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides appropriate information about the device/system and the date for replacement/removal • Gives advice about how to check for the IUD/IUS threads and appropriate actions • Gives advice about follow-up care, both routine and in response to complications, including pregnancy • Supports all verbal information provided with relevant written information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of appropriate written information • Knowledge of complications and the impact of pregnancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilises knowledge base in practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FPA leaflets www.fpa.org.uk/professionals/publications and resources • Manufacturer's patient information literature
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains accurate records of all interventions and outcomes 	Core 1 IK 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes accurate records of interventions undertaken and of outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aware of local policies and guidelines on documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to accuracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMC (2009) <i>Record keeping</i> • <i>Skills for Health</i> HSC434

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Caring for women undergoing removal of an IUD or IUS

Level	Competence	KSF	Performance criteria	Knowledge and understanding	Attitudes and behaviours	Contextual factors
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares environment/equipment for the removal of an IUD/IUS 	HWB 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares the environment, taking into account any specific requirements, e.g. ensuring access for women with disabilities Ensures environment enables the maintenance of privacy and dignity for the woman Prepares the equipment required, e.g. ensuring various sizes of speculum are at hand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local policies and procedures including aseptic technique and infection control Equipment required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anticipates what is needed in advance of procedure Sensitive to needs of client Appreciates need to comply with policies, procedures and guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills for Health GEN6 Local policies and procedures for aseptic technique and infection control
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares the woman physically and psychologically for the removal of an IUD/IUS 	HWB 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implements the chaperoning policy, where appropriate Explains procedure fully and ensures woman understands procedure Advises woman on correct position for procedure and offers assistance where appropriate Ensures the privacy and dignity of the woman is maintained at all times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chaperoning policy Confidentiality policy Moving and handling techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains privacy and dignity of women Appreciates need to comply with policies, procedures and guidelines Commitment to evidence based care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local policies on chaperoning <i>Skills for Health</i> GEN4, CHS6 Local manual handling policies
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safely and effectively removes an IUD/IUS 	HWB 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses personal protective equipment (PPE) Cleanses cervix as per local policy Uses non-touch technique Demonstrates safe removal of IUD/IUS Offers to show removed device/system to woman 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local policies and procedures including aseptic technique and infection control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciates need to comply with policies, procedures and guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local policies and procedures for aseptic technique and infection control
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safely and effectively manages complications of IUD/IUS removal including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> vasovagal shock failure to locate the device device/system stuck in uterine body or cervical canal device in situ with positive pregnancy test 	HWB 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates basic airway management and life support skills Articulates the procedure for managing suspected vasovagal shock Demonstrates the procedure for safe administration of IV atropine if/as appropriate or agreed by local policy Seeks timely and appropriate assistance Records and reports significant adverse event according to local policies Demonstrates ability to ascertain the cause of lost device/system Offers appropriate advice to woman with lost device/system Articulates the procedure for managing a device/system stuck within the uterine body or cervical canal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of potential complications, and their causes, consequences and appropriate treatment Knowledge of basic airway management and life support Local aseptic or no-touch technique according to local policies and procedures Knowledge of local anaesthetics Knowledge and understanding of patient group directions/patient specific directions, if not a non-medical prescriber 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciates need to comply with policies, procedures and guidelines Utilises knowledge base in practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills for Health CHS36, EUSC17 FSRH (2007) RCN (2008) Local patient group directions Anaphylaxis and resuscitation updates in line with local patient group directions/patient specific directions
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains accurate records on all interventions and outcomes 	Core 1 IK 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes accurate records of interventions undertaken and of outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aware of local policies and guidelines on documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to accuracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NMC (2009) <i>Record keeping</i> <i>Skills for Health</i> HSC434

Caring for women undergoing insertion of a subdermal contraceptive implant (SDI)

Level	Competence	KSF	Performance criteria	Knowledge and understanding	Attitudes and behaviours	Contextual factors
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares environment/equipment for the insertion of an SDI 	HWB6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares the environment taking into account any specific requirements, e.g. ensuring access for women with disabilities Ensures environment enables the maintenance of privacy and dignity for the woman Prepares the equipment required Demonstrates familiarity with the insertion techniques of current SDIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local policies and procedures including aseptic technique and infection control Equipment required Knowledge and understanding of patient group directions/patient specific directions, if not a non-medical prescriber 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitive to needs of client Anticipates what is needed in advance of procedure Appreciates need to comply with policies, procedures and guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills for Health GEN6 Local policies and procedures for aseptic technique and infection control NMC (2008b) <i>Standards for medicines management</i> Local patient group directions Local patient specific directions
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares the woman physically and psychologically for the insertion of an SDI 	HWB6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains procedure fully and ensures woman understands procedure All verbal information provided is supported by relevant written information Advices woman on correct position for procedure and offers assistance where appropriate Ensures the privacy and dignity of the woman is maintained at all times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidentiality policy Moving and handling techniques Knowledge of appropriate written information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains privacy and dignity of women Appreciates need to comply with policies, procedures and guidelines Commitment to evidence based care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills for Health GEN4, CHS6 Local manual handling policies FPA leaflets Manufacturer's patient information literature
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safely and effectively inserts an SDI 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies appropriate insertion site Uses personal protective equipment (PPE) Uses aseptic technique Uses topical antiseptic skin preparation Obtains and correctly uses suitable local anaesthetic Demonstrates the correct insertion procedure for a current SDI Applies appropriate dressing and advises woman about aftercare as per local policy Advices woman to see GP or nurse if she notices any infection at site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local aseptic technique policies and procedures Local infection control policies Knowledge of local anaesthetics and analgesia Knowledge and understanding of patient group directions/patient specific directions, if not a non-medical prescriber 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciates need to comply with policies, procedures and guidelines Utilises knowledge base in practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local aseptic technique policies and procedures Local infection control policies Local patient group directions Local patient specific directions
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides accurate and appropriate advice about ongoing care 	HWB 3, 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides appropriate information about the device and the date for replacement/removal Gives advice about the SDI Gives advice about follow-up care, both routine and in response to complications, including pregnancy Supports all verbal information provided with relevant written information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of appropriate written information Knowledge of complications and the impact of pregnancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilises knowledge base in practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FPA leaflets Manufacturer's patient information literature
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains accurate records on all interventions and outcomes 	Core 1 IK 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes accurate records of interventions undertaken and outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aware of local policies and guidelines on documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to accuracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NMC (2009) <i>Record keeping Skills for Health HSC434</i>

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Caring for women undergoing the removal of a SDI

Level	Competence	KSF	Performance criteria	Knowledge and understanding	Attitudes and behaviours	Contextual factors
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares environment/ equipment for the removal of an SDI 	HWB6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares the environment, taking into account any specific requirements, e.g. ensuring access for women with disabilities Ensures environment enables the maintenance of privacy and dignity for the woman Prepares the equipment required Demonstrates familiarity with the removal techniques of current SDIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local policies and procedures including aseptic technique and infection control Equipment required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anticipates what is needed in advance of procedure Sensitive to needs of client Appreciates need to comply with policies, procedures and guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Skills for Health</i> GEN6 Local policies and procedures for aseptic technique and infection control
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares the client physically and psychologically for the removal of an SDI 	HWB6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains procedure fully and ensures woman understands procedure Advises woman on correct position for procedure and offers assistance where appropriate Ensures the privacy and dignity of the woman is maintained at all times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving and handling techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains privacy and dignity of women Appreciates need to comply with policies, procedures and guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Skills for Health</i> GEN4, CHS6 Local manual handling policies
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safely and effectively removes SDI 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies and marks appropriate removal site Uses personal protective equipment (PPE) Uses aseptic technique Uses topical antiseptic skin preparation Obtains and correctly uses suitable local anaesthetic Demonstrates safe removal of SDI Offers to show the SDI to woman after removal Applies appropriate dressing and advises woman about aftercare as per local policy Advises woman to see GP if she notices any infection at removal site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local policies and procedures including aseptic technique and infection control Knowledge of anaesthetics Knowledge and understanding of patient group directions/patient specific directions, if not a non medical prescriber 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciates need to comply with policies, procedures and guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local policies and procedures including aseptic technique and infection control Local patient group directions Local patient specific directions
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains accurate records of all interventions and outcomes 	Core 1 IK 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes accurate records of interventions undertaken and of outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aware of local policies and guidelines on documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to accuracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NMC (2009) <i>Record Keeping</i> <i>Skills for Health</i> HSC434

National Occupational Standards (NOS) referenced in this RCN competency framework

NOS	Title (Titles correct as at 2010)
CHS6	Move and position individuals
CHS36	Provide basic life support
CHS167	Obtain valid consent or authorisation
EUSC17	Manage emergency clinical situations that occur as a result of an intervention
GEN4	Prepare individuals for healthcare activities
GEN6	Manage environments and resources for use during healthcare activities
HSC414	Assess individual needs and preferences
HSC434	Maintain and manage records and reports

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November 2011

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Publication code 004 122

ISBN 987-1-906633-80-6