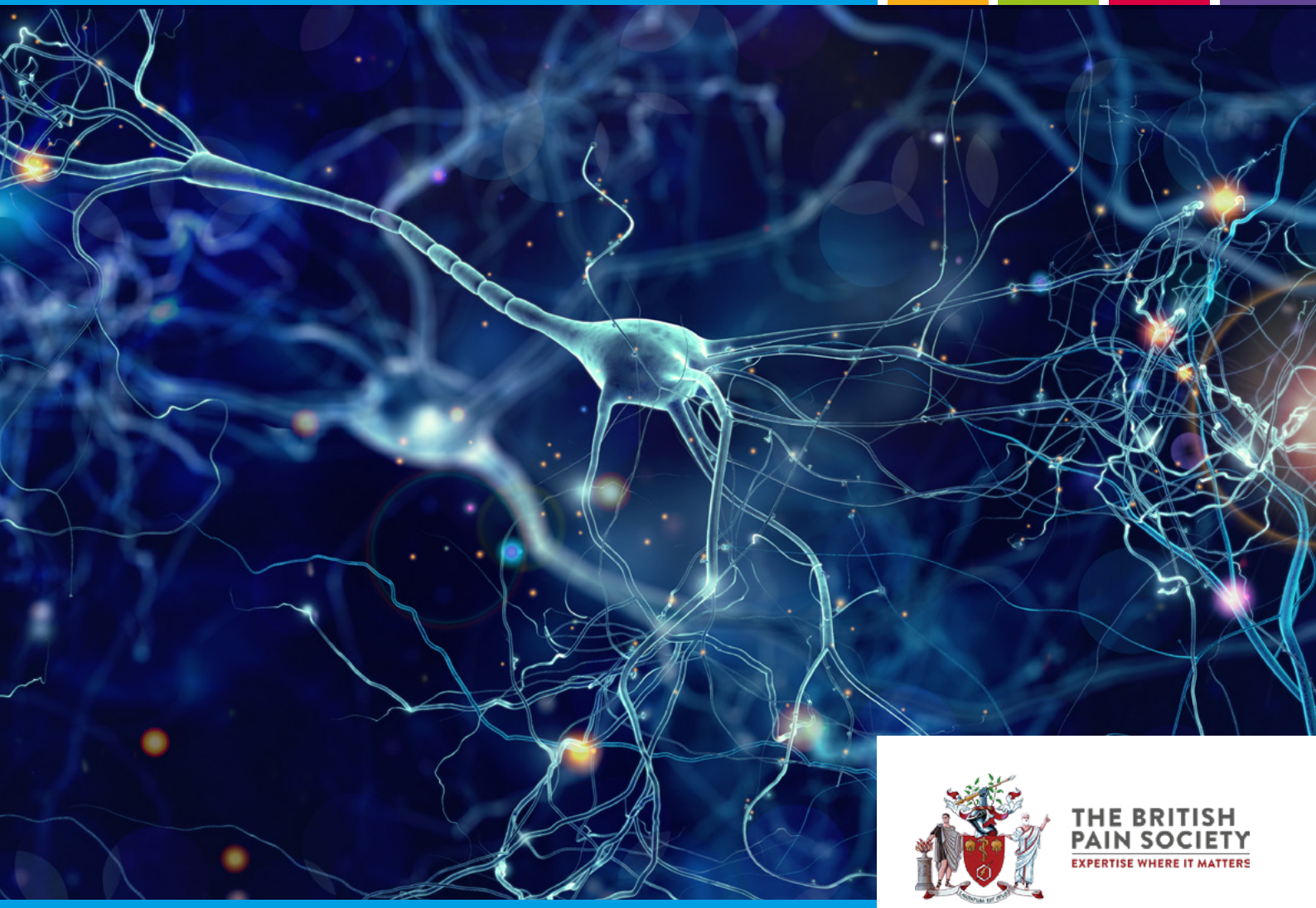
Royal College of Nursing

UK Career Framework for Pain Nurses

Level Seven

CLINICAL PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE



THE BRITISH PAIN SOCIETY
EXPERTISE WHERE IT MATTERS

Pain Nurse Network

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the RCN Pain and Palliative Care Forum for its support in developing this document and to the project team: Martin Galligan (Project Lead), Julie Gregory (Forum Chair), Karin Cannons, Sue Jenkins, Zoe Thomson, Siobhan Jones and Niamh Molloy.

Thanks also to those that took part in the consultation and review of the career framework – without their comments and insights we would not have been able to complete this project: Felicia Cox, Dr Donna Brown, Ofrah Muflahi, Adebukola Lawal, Laserina O'Connor, Emma Davies, Christine Waters, Geinor Bean and Dr Helen Makins.

We would also like to say a special thank you to Erica Gleeson and the New Zealand Pain Society, upon which the original Pain Knowledge and Skills framework was based. Thank you for your continued support in the design and development of this framework.

This document has been designed in collaboration with our members to ensure it meets most accessibility standards. However, if this does not fit your requirements, please contact corporate.communications@rcn.org.uk

RCN Legal Disclaimer

This publication contains information, advice and guidance to help members of the RCN. It is intended for use within the UK but readers are advised that practices may vary in each country and outside the UK. The information in this booklet has been compiled from professional sources, but its accuracy is not guaranteed. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the RCN provides accurate and expert information and guidance, it is impossible to predict all the circumstances in which it may be used. Accordingly, the RCN shall not be liable to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damage caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly by what is contained in or left out of this website information and guidance.

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

© 2021 Royal College of Nursing. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the Publishers. This publication may not be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of by ways of trade in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published, without the prior consent of the Publishers.

Contents

Level Seven 4

Domain One: Recognition of pain 5

Domain Two: Assessment of pain 6

Domain Three: Treatment – physical strategies to manage pain 7

Domain Three: Treatment – self management strategies 8

Domain Three: Treatment – use of pharmacological strategies 9

Domain Three: Treatment – interventional strategies 10

Domain Four: Service development 11

Domain Five: Pain management in specialist groups 12

Level Seven

This document has been designed to be used **in combination with** the appropriate standards / competency assessment framework, for example, for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales.

This document should be used as evidence for your own practice development and can be used as part of a personal development plan or as part of professional body revalidation.

Those working at level 7 will have obtained the knowledge and skills as outlined in the previous levels and this is a natural progression in their development.

Example role title:	Specialist practitioner/clinical expert i.e. clinical nurse specialist, senior clinical nurse specialist
Desirable Qualification:	Working towards or completion of master's level award in either pain management, advanced practice or equivalent topic. Level 6/7 or level 9/10 in Scotland. Pain management module or related topic i.e. palliative care/symptom management. Mentorship/practice supervisor training. Level 7 or level 9/10 in Scotland physical examination and clinical reasoning skills. Level 7 or level 9/10 in Scotland non-medical prescribing qualification. Completion of EFIC Diploma in pain nursing. Completion of degree programme in health care discipline.
Role descriptor:	This practitioner provides care at an advanced level, adhering to the scope of practice and the four pillars of advanced clinical/nursing practice. They have the critical knowledge in pain management, constantly seeking an evidence-base to support their practice. They show innovation and are strongly involved in service improvement and service change. This practitioner may lead or co-lead specific education and training programme.

Domain One: Recognition of pain

This aspect of care examines definitions of pain, its anatomy and physiology, psychological, emotional, spiritual and social aspects of pain.

Knowledge	Skills
1. Demonstrates knowledge and comprehensive understanding of the patient's pain. Experience as evidenced by the successful completion of a postgraduate course in or relating to pain management including diagnosis, anatomy and physiology of pain. 2. Demonstrates leadership in the utilisation of a biopsychosocial/spiritual approach to pain management in practice. 3. Demonstrates the importance of person-centredness approaches in the recognition of the impact of pain on an individual's life.	4. Evaluates the potential adverse physiological effects of acute, persistent and cancer-related pain from the perspective of: • cardiovascular and respiratory systems • gastrointestinal and genitourinary systems • metabolic and neuroendocrine systems • neurological and central nervous system • considers these in the context of wind-up phenomenon (hyperalgesia and allodynia). 5. Evaluates the potential psychological effects of acute and persistent pain and has an awareness of how to support individuals across the psychosocial/spiritual domains of pain. 6. Critically analyses and adapts approach to patients according to the characteristics of their pain when performing observations and assessments when planning and implementing treatment. 7. Discusses and escalates issues in relation to pain diagnosis, anatomy and physiology, and psychological distress with nursing staff, clinicians, managers and the wider health care arena. 8. Initiates appropriate referrals in response to abnormal findings and ensure that patients are followed up appropriately.

Domain Two: Assessment of pain

This aspect of care outlines how pain can be assessed, measured and communicated.

Knowledge	Skills
1. Demonstrates leadership in the use of appropriate frameworks/tools relevant to clinical practice for the comprehensive assessment of pain. 2. Performs a comprehensive pain assessment and health history to ensure a holistic assessment of the impact of pain on the patient's health alongside other long-term conditions they may be experiencing. 3. Performs a comprehensive physical assessment and clinical examination to identify the location and affected areas of pain and to include the impact it may be having on other long-term conditions.	4. Completes a comprehensive clinical examination to gather and critically analyse subjective and objective health data to inform differential diagnosis across a range of complex pain presentations and other precipitating differential diagnoses that will be contributing to the pain experience. 5. Assesses the patient and family's knowledge of pain and provides individualised information and education as appropriate. 6. Assesses nursing staff, clinicians, managers and the wider health care arena's knowledge of pain and provides targeted information and education as appropriate to ensure best practice across an organisation. 7. Demonstrates an advanced level of clinical decision-making. 8. Has advanced communication skills as demonstrated through completion of communication skills training.

Domain Three: Treatment – physical strategies to manage pain

This aspect of care outlines the importance of physical strategies to improve and maintain function in acute and persistent pain.

Knowledge	Skills
1. Demonstrates a comprehensive level of knowledge and understanding of the essential nature of improving and maintaining function in relation to: • activities of daily living • different functional activities • incorporating cognitive behavioural interventions into those functional activities • activity tolerance • sleep and sleep hygiene • relationships – social, sexual and intimate • returning to work. 2. Appreciates and evaluates ethical diversity in developing strategies for ethical approaches in cultural groups within patients and staff members. Identifies shortcomings in the service delivery. 3. Demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of non-pharmacological strategies that can be used to support patients in managing their pain in both acute and persistent pain states.	4. Uses expert communication skills and motivational interviewing techniques to engage the patient in physical health strategies whilst ensuring patient-centred approach. 5. Generates new solutions that best meet the needs of the patient, through lateral thinking and evidence base. 6. Provides thorough consultation with patient and family about the importance of using physical strategies in managing pain to improve and maintain function. 7. Discusses advanced evidence-based knowledge with patients and the interdisciplinary team regarding physical strategies. 8. Independently establishes a nursing and interdisciplinary team training programme on physical strategies. 9. Demonstrates influence into physical strategies and service delivery from national and international evidence and practice.

Domain Three: Treatment – self management strategies

This domain describes how the nursing team contribute to enabling patients to engage with self-management strategies for managing acute and chronic pain.

Knowledge	Skills
1. Demonstrates expert knowledge of how to use health behaviour change theories and strategies. 2. Demonstrates expert knowledge of how to use patient's existing skills, coping strategies and strengths. 3. Demonstrates expert knowledge and understanding of the role and importance of patient-centred approaches.	4. Expert in the use of self-management strategies and coaching patients to optimise their coping skills. 5. Identifies gaps in patient's knowledge and abilities in relation to supportive self-management strategies. 6. Promotes excellence in sleep hygiene, facilitates pacing and challenges unhelpful or destructive beliefs, values and behaviours. 7. Communicates expertly to reinforce helpful behaviours to enhance patient confidence and self-esteem. 8. Acts as a role model to guide and teach other health care staff about the importance of self-management and behavioural approaches. 9. Collaborates closely with other members of the interdisciplinary team such as psychologists and other mental health professionals to ensure safe and effective care for all patients. 10. Evaluates effectiveness of self-management strategies and contributes to local, regional and national health care agenda. 11. Comprehensively discusses and escalates issues in relation to self-management strategies with the wider health care team.

Domain Three: Treatment – use of pharmacological strategies

This domain explores how nurses contribute to the safe, timely and appropriate use of pharmacological therapies.

Knowledge	Skills
1. Advanced knowledge of the pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of medicines used in a wide range of settings. 2. Advanced knowledge of how analgesia and medication prescribing can impact mental capacity. 3. Understands the importance of a multimodal approach to pain management and that pharmacological strategies may not be the most appropriate tool. 4. Leads on the development of protocols and guidelines for treatment of side effects and complications associated with pharmacological strategies. 5. In-depth knowledge of the roles of the regulatory agencies involved in drug use, monitoring and licensing (for example the National Institute of Clinical Excellence, the Committee on Safety of Medicines, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and local formularies committees).	6. Completion of an independent and supplementary prescribing course. 7. Develops and teaches organisation-wide on analgesic pharmacological strategies. 8. Provides expert advice and support to patients, relatives, nurses and the wider interdisciplinary team on the use of analgesia as part of a wider pain management plan. 9. Supports patients and the wider interdisciplinary team with analgesic deprescribing through use of their expert knowledge and advanced communication skills. 10. Acts as role model and exemplar for opioid stewardship and safe prescribing practice. 11. Collaborates with local, regional, national and international expert working groups in relation to pharmacological strategies. 12. Recognises and acts appropriately, taking the lead in relation to clinical signs and symptoms of adverse effects from interventions.

Domain Three: Interventional strategies

This aspect of care outlines the role of interventions to improve and maintain function.

Knowledge	Skills
1. Demonstrates an advanced level of clinical decision-making as to the suitability of patients for pain management interventions and the outcomes. 2. Independently interprets and manages the clinical signs and symptoms associated with multiple co-morbidities and interventional therapies. 3. Demonstrates the ability to provide advanced clinical knowledge, skills and advice for patients undergoing a pain management intervention.	4. Communicates advanced evidence-based knowledge with patients, families, interdisciplinary team and managers at local, regional and national settings with regards to the use and suitability of interventional strategies. 5. Demonstrates the ability to perform comprehensive clinical examination of patients who have undergone an interventional strategy and identify potential serious adverse effects. 6. Comprehensively discusses and escalates issues in relation to potential adverse effects, patient safety or service delivery in relation to interventional strategies with nursing staff, clinicians, managers and the wider health care arena. 7. Collaborates on and initiates the development of policies and guidelines pertinent to practices related to interventional techniques. 8. Involved in, and where appropriate leads on, audit and research activities to measure, evaluate and feedback to managers and the wider health care arena on interventional practice outcomes.

Domain Four: Service development

This aspect of care describes how the nursing team contributes to the development of person-centred pain management provision ensuring the use of audit, research and education.

Knowledge	Skills
1. Communicates and disseminates innovations in nursing practice at local, regional and national level. 2. Plans for and applies local/national policy initiatives that will change pain management practice within staff team. 3. Promotes a dynamic pain service that responds to appropriate changes and motivates the staff team. 4. Plans for, and applies, ethical and professional education to manage patients in pain and uses wider concepts in the professional and ethical literature to improve practice. 5. Acts as a role model to guide and teach other health care staff about the rationale for incorporating a biopsychosocial/ spiritual approach to pain management. 6. Has advanced knowledge base on the use of audit, service evaluation, quality improvement and research as a means for influencing and developing local, regional and national practice.	7. Plans for and applies local/national policy initiatives that will change pain management practice within staff team. 8. Promotes a dynamic pain service that responds to appropriate changes and motivates the staff team. 9. Develops a common vision of patient-centred and evidence-based services and creates systems and processes to achieve this in liaison with other groups of: • service users • wider public • colleagues and co-workers • general practitioner/primary care health care providers • people in other parts of the organisation • other agencies. 10. Effectively engages the public, service users and other interested parties in an open and effective discussion on values, direction, policies and strategies for the organisation/services. 11. Identifies own strengths and utilises them to develop the pain service within sphere of own practice. 12. Acts as a mentor and role model to support and develop roles of staff in relation to pain management. 13. Works in partnership with others to develop, take forward and evaluate direction of policies and strategies. 14. Lobbies for resources to support and develop pain services. 15. Exhibits confident and independent decision-making. 16. Demonstrates examples of being a clinical expert through publication and speaking at local and national conferences. 17. Working at local and regional level in the development of best practice guidance and protocols.

Domain Five: Pain management in specialist groups

This aspect of care describes how the nursing team contributes to the development of person-centred pain management provision in specialist complex groups ensuring the use of audit, research, and education.

Knowledge	Skills
1. Demonstrates an in-depth knowledge and comprehensive understanding of the biopsychosocial model of pain and relationship to pain behaviours in complex and specialist pain groups. 2. Demonstrates in-depth knowledge and comprehensive understanding of the pathophysiology and psychology of: • addiction and substance misuse • chronic primary pain conditions • older adults • children and young people • headache and migraine • cancer-related pain • palliative care and end of life • diabetic peripheral neuropathy • neuromodulation • learning disabilities • other areas specific to own area of practice. 3. Identifies situations such as suicidal ideation that require a more comprehensive assessment and seeks advice or refers as appropriate. 4. Identifies and works within sphere of own practice. 5. Demonstrates consistent effective leadership and clarity in working with patients with complex pain. 6. Comprehensively and critically evaluates pain management interventions for patients with complex pain.	7. Undertakes a comprehensive biopsychosocial assessment of a patient with complex pain. 8. Demonstrates clinical decision-making on the implementation and effect of pain management strategies in complex pain. 9. Evaluates the effect of pain management approaches, using biopsychosocial assessments for patients receiving evidence-based treatment. 10. Manages adverse effects and completes comprehensive documentation in clinical records. 11. Collaborates on and initiates the development of local and regional policies, guiding practice in relation to complex pain. 12. Independently delivers nursing and interdisciplinary team education and/or programmes at local and regional level. 13. Acts as role model to guide and teach other health care staff about the importance of complex pain. 14. Demonstrates an in-depth knowledge of the rationale for any investigations required for the diagnosis and ongoing management of the patient with pain needs. 15. Leads on audit, service evaluation and quality improvement activities to measure, evaluate and feedback to managers and the wider health care arena. 16. Demonstrates influence on the patient living with complex pain health care agenda at a local and regional level.

The RCN represents nurses and nursing, promotes excellence in practice and shapes health policies

RCN Direct
www.rcn.org.uk/direct
0345 772 6100

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

020 7409 3333
www.rcn.org.uk

Febraury 2023
Review date: August 2024
Publication code: 010 750

Royal College of Nursing