

# UK Career Framework for Pain Nurses

Level Three

CLINICAL PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE



**THE BRITISH  
PAIN SOCIETY**  
EXPERTISE WHERE IT MATTERS



Pain Nurse Network

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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](mailto:corporate.communications@rcn.org.uk)

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## Level Three

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 part of a personal development plan.

Those working at level 3 will have obtained the knowledge and skills as outlined in the previous levels and this is a natural progression in their development.

<b>Example role title:</b>	HCA Trainee nurse associate (TNA) First and second year nursing student
<b>Qualification:</b>	<p><b>HCA/HCSW</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>England</b> Care Certificate</li> <li>• <b>Northern Ireland</b> Standards for Nursing Assistants, HCSW apprenticeship standards</li> <li>• <b>Scotland</b> completion or working towards care certificate</li> <li>• <b>Wales</b> Developing Excellence in Healthcare NHS Wales Skills and Career framework for HCSWs.</li> </ul> <p>NVQ level 2, SVQ level 2, GCSE grades A – C, Scottish standard grades credit level,</p> <p>NVQ level 3 or SVG level 3, Higher National Certificate. Undertake BTEC Higher National Diploma or Higher Education Diploma, Level 8, foundation degree, Level 5, or a 2-year foundation degree/ apprenticeship.</p> <p>NCFE CACHE level 2 Certificate in Healthcare Support Services, the NCFE CACHE level 3 Diploma in Healthcare Support.</p> <p><b>TNA</b></p> <p>GCSEs grade 9 to 4 (A to C), in maths and English or Functional Skills level 2 in maths and English. A foundation degree over 2 years, meet 15 standards set out in the Care Certificate (England), meet NMC standards for pre-registration Nursing Associate programme standards.</p>
<b>Role descriptors:</b>	Those working at level 3 require knowledge of facts, principles and awareness of pain assessment and management concepts. They may carry out a wider range of duties than the person working at level 2 and will have more responsibility, with guidance and supervision available when needed. They will contribute to service development and be responsible for their own personal development.

# 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
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Understands and explains that pain is: “Whatever the experiencing person says it is, existing whenever the experiencing person says it does” (McCaffery, 1968).</li><li>2. Able to describe different types of pain such as acute, chronic and cancer pain and how these may affect patients.</li><li>3. Demonstrates an understanding of the biological, psychological and social aspects that influence the pain experience.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>4. Demonstrates how to adapt their approach to support and manage patients with different types of pain.</li><li>5. Able to rationalise different types of pain management strategies, for different types of pain.</li></ol>

## Domain Two: Assessment of pain

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

Knowledge	Skills
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrates an understanding of the barriers to the assessment and evaluation of pain from the perspective of the health professional, person/patient, family and general public.</li> <li>2. Explains the selection of a suitable tool to perform and document pain assessment and the need to assess at rest and on movement.</li> <li>3. Awareness of how to adapt approaches to facilitate pain assessment.</li> <li>4. Demonstrates an understanding of patients unable to self-report pain who require alternative pain assessment techniques. Explains that family members of carers can help with assessment.</li> <li>5. Understands and explains when pain assessment needs to be acted on.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Works within the limits of the level and competency of their own practice and the agreed ways of working by their employer.</li> <li>7. Works as part of the team to assess the patient's pain.</li> <li>8. Assesses pain across range of patient groups and clinical circumstances. Communicates with the person/their carer/their family/colleagues in an honest, respectful, compassionate, accurate and timely way.</li> <li>9. Recognises issues and applies agreed protocols to escalate care in relations to pain assessment/informs senior health care professional immediately.</li> <li>10. Completes accurate documentation within clinical records, in line with the organisation's policy.</li> </ol>

## 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
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrates knowledge and recognises the importance of physical strategies such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• turning and positioning</li> <li>• wound support</li> <li>• reach devices</li> <li>• heat and cold</li> <li>• massage</li> <li>• mobilisation</li> <li>• exercise</li> <li>• role of physiotherapy</li> <li>• hydrotherapy</li> <li>• TENS.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Explains the policy that drives this pain practice.</li> <li>3. Explains and rationalises the need for all individuals/patients to have access to the provision of physical strategies available for the management of pain.</li> <li>4. Explains and describes the issues of safeguarding individuals/ patients and providing accurate patient information.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Works within the limits of the level and competency of their own practice and the agreed ways of working by their employer.</li> <li>6. Works collaboratively with colleagues across all disciplines to support person-centred care.</li> <li>7. Ensures equipment or medical devices are working properly or in the correct position, for example, wheelchairs, prosthetics, catheter tubes.</li> <li>8. Explains the physical strategies to patients and families and how they improve or maintain function, in an honest, respectful, compassionate, accurate and timely way.</li> <li>9. Identifies ways of engaging and empowering patients.</li> <li>10. Observes and reports the effectiveness of physical strategies, in line with the organisation's policy. Recognises issues and utilises agreed protocols to escalate issues that arise.</li> <li>11. Evaluates effectiveness of physical strategies, through pain assessment and asking the patient (or their family member/ carer).</li> </ol>



## 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
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrates an awareness of how chronic differs from acute pain and the role self-management plays in helping improve the physical and psychological impact of pain.</li> <li>2. Rationalises and explains the need for all individuals/patients to have access to the provision of self-management information.</li> <li>3. Describes and rationalises self-management strategies that individuals/patients can use in the management of pain:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• distraction methods:                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• listen to music</li> <li>• watch a film/programme</li> <li>• relaxation</li> <li>• mindfulness/meditation</li> <li>• knitting.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• exercise</li> <li>• other strategies used by patient.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Is aware of the different ways in which the role of self - management can be used for chronic pain by:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promoting movement</li> <li>• reducing anxiety</li> <li>• improving comfort</li> <li>• facilitating sleep</li> <li>• distraction</li> <li>• involving family.</li> </ul> </li> <li>5. Explains and describes the issues of safeguarding individuals/patients and providing accurate patient information.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Works within the limits of the level and competency of their own practice and the agreed ways of working by their employer.</li> <li>7. Demonstrates a concept of how self-management strategies can be optimised within the context of clinical practice.</li> <li>8. Demonstrates the ability to actively take part in promoting self-management strategies at a basic level as part of the interdisciplinary team.</li> <li>9. Recognises the need for all patients to have access to the provision of self-management education.</li> <li>10. Uses nursing care to promote movement, reduce anxiety, improve comfort, facilitate restful sleep and encourage distraction to help self-manage pain.</li> <li>11. Discusses with the person/their carer/their family ways in which self-management can be optimised, for example, creating the right environment, in an honest, respectful, compassionate, accurate and timely way.</li> <li>12. Assesses and reports the effectiveness of self-management strategies, in line with the organisation's policy.</li> <li>13. Appropriately escalates care to senior when recognises own limitations.</li> </ol>



# 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
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrates, with guidance, knowledge of medications including allergies, analgesia, non-prescribed drugs, over the counter drugs, alcohol and tobacco intake.</li> <li>2. Has awareness of routes of administration and side effects of commonly used medicines in the area of practice.</li> <li>3. Has an awareness that medicines may impact on an individual's mental capacity.</li> <li>4. Understands the pain management policy and describes what drives this pain practice.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Works within the limits of the level and competency of their own practice and the agreed ways of working by their employer.</li> <li>6. Works collaboratively with colleagues across all disciplines to support person-centred care.</li> <li>7. Administers commonly prescribed pharmacological strategies under supervision (<a href="http://www.nmc-uk.org/publications/standards">www.nmc-uk.org/publications/standards</a>).</li> <li>8. Gives simple and clear instructions to patients about pain relief under supervision.</li> <li>9. Accepts and documents patients' right to decline analgesia.</li> <li>10. Recognises and uses protocols to appropriately escalate potential problems to a senior health care professional in relation to clinical signs and symptoms of adverse effects.</li> </ol>

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