

UK Career Framework for Pain Nurses

Levels One and Two

CLINICAL PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE



Acknowledgements

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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

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Level One and Two

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.

Example role title:	Grade 1 – Health Care Support Worker/Health Care Assistant/Nursing Assistant Grade 2 – Health Care Support Worker/Health Care Assistant/Nursing Assistant
Qualification:	Level 1 – GCSE grades D – G, Scottish standard grades foundation or general level England – The Care Certificate Standards (Skills for Health and Health Education England) Northern Ireland – Standards for Nursing Assistants Level 2 – England – The Care Certificate Standards (Skills for Health and Health Education England) Northern Ireland – Standards for Nursing Assistants Scotland – completion or working towards care certificate, NVQ level 2, SVQ level 2, GCSE grades A – C, Scottish standard grades credit level Wales – Developing Excellence in Healthcare NHS Wales Skills and Career framework for HCSWs
Role descriptor:	Those working at level 1 are at entry level and will require a basic general knowledge regarding pain assessment and management. They may undertake a limited number of set skills in relation to pain assessment under direct supervision. They are new starters to work in the health care setting and will likely progress to level 2 rapidly. Those working at level 2 require basic factual knowledge regarding pain assessment and management. They will perform clinical or administrative duties according to established protocols, procedures or systems of work.

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"> 1. Recognises the signs that an individual is in pain or discomfort. 2. Understands and explains that pain is: “Whatever the experiencing person says it is, existing whenever the experiencing person says it does” (McCaffery, 1968). 3. Understands and explains that pain may have different symptoms and qualities in some patients. These include verbal reporting of pain from the individual, non-verbal communication and change in behaviour. 4. Understands and explains that there are biological, psychological and social aspects that influence the pain experience. 5. Understands and explains what pain scores and symptoms need to be reported to a senior health care professional. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Grade 1: works under supervision. 7. Carries out observations of the individual’s/ patient’s physiology such as temperature, pulse, blood pressure, respiratory rate, sedation score and oxygen saturation. 8. Performs and documents pain assessment. Accurately documents in line with the organisation’s policy and communicates data/findings with other health personnel. 9. Recognises and reports observations, pain scores and/or symptoms that need to be addressed to a senior health care professional.

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"> 1. Understands and explains that there are barriers to the assessment and evaluation of pain from the perspective of the health professional, person/patient, family and general public. 2. Understands and explains what recommended pain assessment tools are used in the clinical area. 3. Recognises and explains the need for all individuals/patients to have their pain assessed. 4. Understands and explains how to use the recommended pain assessment tools for the clinical area and performs assessment at rest and on movement. 5. Demonstrates an awareness of patients unable to self-report pain who require alternative pain assessment techniques. Understands that family members of carers can help with assessment. 6. Understands and explains when pain assessment needs to be reported to a senior health care professional. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Grade 1: works under supervision. 8. Works within the limits of the level and competency of their own practice and the agreed ways of working by their employer. 9. Works as part of the team to assess the patient's pain. 10. Communicates with the person/their carer/ their family /colleagues in an honest, respectful, compassionate, accurate and timely way. 11. Assesses and documents pain at appropriate times and re-assesses as needed, in line with the organisation's policy. 12. Completes accurate documentation within clinical records, in line with the organisation's policy. 13. Reports concerns about pain scores to a senior health care professional immediately.

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"> 1. Understands and explains the physical strategies available for the management of pain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • turning, positioning and re-positioning • wound support • reach devices • heat and cold • massage. 2. Has an understanding and explains the policy that drives this pain practice. 3. Describes the need for all individuals/ patients to have access to the provision of physical strategies available for the management of pain. 4. Understands and explains the issues of safeguarding individuals/ patients and providing accurate patient information. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Grade 1: works under supervision. 6. Works within the limits of the level and competency of their own practice and the agreed ways of working by their employer. 7. Works collaboratively with colleagues across all disciplines to support person-centred care. 8. Ensures equipment or medical devices are working properly or in the correct position, for example, wheelchairs, prosthetics, catheter tubes. 9. Observes and reports the effectiveness of physical strategies, in line with the organisation's policy. 10. Evaluates effectiveness of physical strategies through pain assessment and asking the patient (or their family member/ carer). 11. Removes or minimises any environmental factors causing pain or discomfort. These can include wet or soiled clothing or bed linen, poorly positioned lighting, noise. 12. Completes accurate documentation within clinical records, in line with the organisation's policy. 13. Reports concerns to a senior health care professional immediately. 14. Communicates effectively with the patient, family and other members of the team about these strategies, in an honest, respectful, compassionate, accurate and timely way.

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"> 1. Understands and explains that there is a difference between acute and chronic pain, including the physical and psychological effects. 2. Describes the need for all individuals/ patients to have access to the provision of self-management information. 3. Demonstrates and explains awareness of self-management strategies that individuals/patients can use in the management of pain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distraction methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listen to music • watch a film/programme • relaxation • mindfulness/meditation • knitting. • exercise • other strategies used by patient. 4. Understands and explains how nursing care interventions may contribute to promoting self-management strategies, as part of the interdisciplinary team. 5. Understands and explains the principals of safeguarding individuals/patients and patient information and can escalate concerns to senior health care professionals. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Grade 1: works under supervision. 7. Works within the limits of the level and competency of their own practice and the agreed ways of working by their employer. 8. Works collaboratively with colleagues across all disciplines to support person-centred care. 9. Uses nursing care to promote movement, reduce anxiety, improve comfort, facilitate restful sleep and encourage distraction to help self-manage pain. 10. 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. 11. Observes and reports the effectiveness of self-management strategies, in line with the organisation’s policy. 12. Seeks support and appropriately escalates care to senior health care professional when recognises own limitations.

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"> 1. Describes the different routes of administration of commonly used medicines to manage pain, in their area of practice. 2. Describes the risks and side effects of commonly used medicines to manage pain, in their area of practice. 3. Has an understanding of the policy and describes what drives this pain practice. 4. Describes the importance of continuous data collection and quality improvement that informs effective and safe pain management. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Grade 1: works under supervision. 6. Works within the limits of the level and competency of their own practice and the agreed ways of working by their employer. 7. Works collaboratively with colleagues across all disciplines to support person-centred care. 8. Assists with giving analgesics under direct supervision (www.nmc-uk.org/publications/standards). 9. Works within relevant legislative and local standard operating procedures. 10. Explains the importance of safeguarding patient information. 11. Escalates pharmacological strategies' concerns and problems (not working and/or side effects), to senior health care professional immediately.

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