

Primary Care, Community Care Wound Workforce Knowledge Framework

Northants ICB

Rationale:

It is vital General Practice nurses/community nursing, community ward teams have attained the appropriate wound care competencies for their role.

Wound care should not be viewed as a separate clinical issue but as an integral part of the holistic assessment, including optimisation of long-term conditions which cause or contribute to wounding and delayed/non-healing.

Failure to diagnose wound type, leads to potential delays in providing patients with appropriate evidence-based treatment pathways, which could result in delayed/non healing and/or secondary complications.

It is important that General Practice nurses/community nursing, community ward teams are up to date with information on wound care and use this in care planning with patients to maximize their potential for wound healing. It is vital to collaborate between Primary Care, community and the wider systems, where appropriate, to mitigate the risk of barriers to care and improve access/equity to achieving best practice.

Scope:

This framework articulates core capabilities necessary for safe and effective care. The capabilities (i.e., skills, knowledge, and behaviours) described in the framework are defined as tiers. Each tier articulates the minimum and core capability to be expected as opposed to the maximum. The knowledge tiers correspond to the wound tier descriptors. ***Note Tier 5 requires Consultant review, therefore a tier 5 knowledge descriptor has not been included in the framework***

Northamptonshire Wound Descriptor Tiers:

- Tier 1 – Healing wounds less than 28 days old, evidence of healthy granulation/epithelial tissue, suture & clips removal, new drains, tubes, stomas that require dressings managed by the General Practice Nurses/ Community Nurses for housebound people/ Ward Staff.
- Tier 2 – Healing wound with evidence of healthy granulation/epithelia tissues that meets the following criteria: ABPI 0.8-1.3, Wound area <100cm², Wound present <6 months, tubes/drains/stomas that are healing, No history cardiac failure, Current infection/fungal infection resolved 7-10 days, No history of non-concordance with treatment, wound reduces in size by 20-30% at 4-6 weeks, No fixed angle or reduced range of motion, No foot deformity, No unmanaged pain, No severe lymphoedema, managed by the General Practice Nurses/ Community Nurses for house bound / Ward Staff.

- Tier 3–Healing wound with evidence of healthy granulation/epithelia tissues that meets the following criteria:- ABPI outside of 0.8-1.3 range, unable to obtain ABPI, Wound area >100cm², wounds not reduced in size by 20-30% at 4-6 weeks, Wound present >6 months, Controlled/uncontrolled cardiac failure, Unresolved infection and fungal infections or history of recurrent infections, History of non-concordance with treatment, Fixed angle or reduced range of motion, Foot deformity, Unmanaged pain, Severe lymphoedema, heavily exudating responding to treatment, fungating wounds, Healthy static wounds for people living well with wounds (wound more than 6 months), tubes/drains/stomas with open wounds that are healthy, managed by the General Practice Nurses/ Community Nurses / Ward Staff
- Tier 4 –Wounds failing to heal despite adherence to local pathways or where pathway is assessed as NOT working, Wounds that have failed to heal by the 1st 12 weeks, Wounds with unresolved infection/discharge/odour/exposed muscle/tissues/uncontrolled pain/unresolved maceration/unresolved fungal infection/ slough or necrotic or devitalised tissue in the wound bed/over granulation/debridement required / necrotic tissue damage/ new tracking /heavily exudating with no progress, tubes/drains/stoma sites with open wounds that are not healthy & healing, wounds with unusual presentation or feature, Specialist advice/support and management planning if after treatment the wound is not healing, or Nurse has other concerns, Seek advice if deteriorating/other complications, managed by the Tissue Viability Nurses (TVN) for triage, advice, assessment, and treatment when required.
- Tier 5 – Practice Nurse has clinical safety concerns, Surgical post op wound complications and infections not resolved after 5 days. Suspected implant/prosthetic infection, Orthopaedic , Vascular As Per Lower Limb pathway ABPI less than 0.5, stop compression and refer urgently, Those with ABPI 0.5-0.8 class 1 compression, Those with exposed tissue/muscles/tendons. Dermatology urgent those with suspected skin cancer, those with difficult to treat skin conditions that require specialist assessment & treatment plan. Diabetic as Per Diabetes and High Risk Foot pathway, High Risk foot patients on IV therapy. Plastics, patients under the care of Burns and Plastics who require metal forceps and magnifying glass to removed dressings will be managed by the Burns and Plastics team.

Knowledge Tiers & Roles:

- **Health Care support workers & Nurse Associate**
Knowledge Tier 1: Capabilities that require a general understanding and that support provision of primary care/general practice nursing.
- **Registered Nurse & Enhanced Registered Nurse**

Knowledge Tier 2: Capabilities that enable the provision of care more independently and a degree of critical analysis.

- **Registered Nurse Advanced level practice & Nurse Consultant**

Knowledge Tier 3: Capabilities that require an ability to provide care autonomously and independently, an ability to lead practice, operating at the cutting edge of innovation.

A separate competency assessment document supports the wound care framework to ensure appropriate wound care standards are documented supporting quality standards of care.

The below table suggestions are based on the Surgical Wound Recommendations 2024 and the NWCSP National Wound Care Workforce Framework for England, 2023.

Scope of practice for Nurses & HCAs within Community & Primary Care (Lower limb)

Role Level Descriptor	Knowledge Tier	Qualifications	Skills and Application of Knowledge and Scope of Practice Lower limb
Health Care Assistant	1	<p>Introduction or awareness course, 1–3-day duration. This should be independent and objective.</p> <p>Period of supervised practice from RN/ANP until deemed competent/proficient within scope of practice.</p> <p>Will always require indirect supervision, at times will need direct supervision post training in practice.</p>	<p>Skin care (hygiene and emollient application).</p> <p>Basic wound bed preparation including cleansing and mechanical debridement.</p> <p>Application of dressings as per a care plan prepared by a professional registrant (NMC or equivalent).</p> <p>Apply compression therapy such as inelastic and elastic compression bandages.</p> <p>Measure for “ready to wear” compression hosiery where clinically indicated</p>
Nurse Associate	1 & 2	<p>An introductory course in lower limb management, 2 – 5 days duration. This should be independent and objective.</p>	<p>Undertake a Doppler / ABPI upon the recommendation of a Registered Nurse (or equivalent), who has assessed the patient for suitability.</p>

		<p>Period of supervised practice from RN/ANP until deemed competent/proficient within scope of practice. Will mainly require indirect supervision, at times will need direct supervision.</p> <p>Training may be led by specialist nurses such as TVN</p>	<p>Collaborate with a Registered Nurse (or equivalent) to discuss and interpret the results of the lower limb assessment and to develop a treatment plan.</p> <p>Apply compression therapy such as inelastic and elastic compression bandages.</p> <p>Measure for “ready to wear” and “made to measure” hosiery, leg ulcer kits and wraps.</p>
Registered Nurse	2	<p>A course in lower limb management, 3 – 10 days duration. This should be independent and objective.</p> <p>Period of peer support from RN/ANP until competent/proficient within scope of practice. Training may be led by specialist nurses such as TVN or equivalent.</p>	<p>Holistic patient assessment, including vascular assessment; ABPI/TBPI.</p> <p>Referral for further intervention from specialist teams as appropriate. Diagnosis and treatment planning using a variety of compression therapies.</p> <p>Supervising capacity for junior or new members of staff. Leadership of lower limb management in practice setting for audit work and policy creation. Optional: Independent Prescribing Advanced clinical skills Conservative sharp debridement</p>
Enhanced Level (TVN/specialist) & ANP	3	<p>Level 7 advanced lower limb management module or equivalent.</p> <p>Lower limb specific course at Level 7 or</p>	<p>Service development/improvement, education, research, leadership</p>

		<p>equivalent in advanced techniques or enhanced clinical practice.</p> <p>Period of peer support from RN/ANP until competent/proficient within scope of practice.</p>	<p>Introduce new techniques, lead change</p> <p>Consultation skills – history taking, differential diagnosis</p> <p>Direct referrals</p>
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Scope of practice for Nurses & HCAs within community, primary care and general practice (Surgical wounds)

Role Level Descriptor	Tier	Qualifications	Skills and Application of Knowledge and Scope of Practice surgical wounds
RN	2	<p>Lower leg and Surgical wound complications and wound infection course, half day duration is the minimum recommended course length.</p> <p>Training may be led by specialist nurses such as TVN or equivalent.</p> <p>Period of peer support from senior nurse/ANP until competent/proficient within scope of practice.</p>	<p>Full understanding of the early surgical wound complications for escalation to 999; Post-operative haemorrhage Catastrophic dehiscence exposing internal organs</p> <p>Full understanding of the management of intermediate surgical wound complications and able to plan care appropriately ; Systemic signs of infection/sepsis Spreading infection Local infection Dehiscence when surgery involves implants/exposed implants</p> <p>Apply Aseptic Non-Touch Technique (ANTT) Supervising capacity for junior or new members of staff.</p> <p>Leadership of Surgical Site Infection (SSI) prevention in practice setting for audit work and policy creation.</p> <p>Optional:</p>

			Independent Prescribing Advanced clinical skills Conservative sharp debridement
Enhanced Level (TVN/specialist) & ANP	3	Level 7 advanced wound management course or equivalent. Period of peer support from senior supervisor until competent/proficient within scope of practice.	Service development/improvement, education, research, leadership Introduce new techniques, lead change Consultation skills – history taking, differential diagnosis Direct referrals

Scope of practice for community, primary care and general practice (Pressure ulcers)

Role Level Descriptor	Tier	Qualifications	Skills and Application of Knowledge and Scope of Practice surgical wounds
RN	2	A pressure ulcer prevention and management course at least 3 hours duration. curriculum “Intermediate level”. Training may be led by specialist nurses such as TVN/AHP or equivalent. Period of peer support from RN/ANP/AHP until competent/proficient within scope of practice	Undertake initial risk screening +/- pressure ulcer risk assessment using a recognised tool. Purpose T (adult/paediatric) is the recommended tool (other tools may be in use). Full understanding of the aSSKING framework and aetiology of pressure ulcer development. Develop care plans for prevention/treatment/management of pressure ulcers. Supervising capacity for junior or new members of staff. Leadership of pressure ulcer prevention in practice setting for audit work and policy creation. Optional:

			Independent Prescribing Advanced clinical skills Conservative sharp debridement
Enhanced Level (TVN/specialist) & ANP	3	Level 7 advanced wound management course or equivalent. Pressure ulcer core curriculum “Advanced level”. Period of peer support from senior clinical supervisor until competent/proficient within scope of practice.	As above Service development/improvement, education, research, leadership Introduce new techniques, Lead change Consultation skills – history taking, differential diagnosis Direct referrals

Suggested Wound Care Education For Each Knowledge Tier

Tier 1 – HCA & Nurse Associate

- Essentials of Skin Care
- Essentials of Wound Assessment
- Essentials of Leg Ulceration
- Essentials of the Foot at Risk
- Essentials of Digital Wound Imaging
- Essentials of Pressure Ulcer Prevention
- Granulation Game
- Nutrition and Lifestyle Considerations
- Pressure Ulcer Risk Assessment – Purpose T
- Essentials of Surgical Wounds
- Essentials of Wound Infection

Tier 2 - RN

- Essentials of Skin Care
- Essentials of Wound Assessment
- Essentials of Leg Ulceration
- Essentials of the Foot at Risk
- Essentials of Digital Wound Imaging
- Essentials of Pressure Ulcer Prevention
- Granulation Game
- Nutrition and Lifestyle Considerations

- Pressure Ulcer Risk Assessment – Purpose T
- Essentials of Surgical Wounds
- Essentials of Wound Infection
- The Foot at Risk
- Choosing the right compression therapy
- Dressing wounds
- An introduction to wound debridement
- Vascular assessment of the lower limb
- Diagnosing and managing wound infection
- Managing open surgical wounds
- Managing surgical wound complications

Tier 3 - TVN/specialist & ANP

- Essentials of Skin Care
- Essentials of Wound Assessment
- Essentials of Leg Ulceration
- Essentials of the Foot at Risk
- Essentials of Digital Wound Imaging
- Essentials of Pressure Ulcer Prevention
- Granulation Game
- Nutrition and Lifestyle Considerations
- Pressure Ulcer Risk Assessment – Purpose T
- Essentials of Surgical Wounds
- Essentials of Wound Infection
- The Foot at Risk
- Choosing the right compression therapy
- Dressing wounds
- An introduction to wound debridement
- Vascular assessment of the lower limb
- Diagnosing and managing wound infection
- Managing open surgical wounds
- Managing surgical wound complications

Level 6 & 7 courses

- Wound Management Continuing Professional Development
- Surgical Care Practice
- Tissue Viability (Professional Practice)
- Wound Healing and Tissue Repair
- Pressure Ulcers: Prevention and Treatment
- Advancing Practice in Peripheral Vascular Disease – MSC

- Principles of Wound Care
- MSc in Wound Healing and Tissue Repair
- Wound Healing Foundation Modules: (Foundation in Diabetic Foot Ulcer Management, Foundation in Leg Ulcer Management, Foundation in Pressure Ulcer Management).

References

1. NWCSP/Skills for Health. 2023. National Wound Care Workforce Framework
2. NWCSP. 2024. Lower Limb Recommendations Suite
3. NWCSP. 2024. Pressure Ulcer Recommendations
4. NWCSP. 2024. Surgical Wound Complications Recommendations
5. Skills for Health Wound Care Educational Resources for Community and Primary Care Nurses