Healthcare Support Worker

Development and Education Framework

for Levels 2 – 4 Healthcare Science Healthcare Support Workers.

Recommended general standard.

Development and Education Framework for Levels 2 – 4 Healthcare Science Healthcare Support Workers. *Recommended general standard.*

Development and Education Framework for Levels 2 – 4 Healthcare Science Healthcare Support Workers

Introduction

The healthcare science workforce is the fourth largest clinical group in NHS Scotland. Healthcare scientists are an important part of the multi-disciplinary healthcare team. They contribute to prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation services. Healthcare scientists collectively perform 80% of all diagnoses and are involved in the entire patient pathways from diagnosis, treatment to rehabilitation.
Healthcare science include over 50 different specialities, categorised into four different strands:
- bioinformatics and data science
- life science
- physical science and clinical engineering
- physiological science

An important aspect of this workforce is the availability of entry level roles and the career progression of staff once employed within these roles and encompasses Scottish Government Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy

This document outlines a generic development and education framework for Healthcare Science support staff. The Framework is designed to promote consistency skill level at a given point in the career framework. The NHS Education for Scotland (NES) Healthcare Science Healthcare Support Worker framework is based on that developed by the NMAHP programme. The Framework supports the development of core knowledge, skills, and behaviours in **4-Pillars** of practice[1] and enables profession specific and specialist knowledge, skills and behaviours to be added for HCSWs working at Levels 2-4. The levels at which support staff work are those of the NHS Career Framework for Health (Appendix 1) which reflects role development and progression, and **not** those of Agenda for Change which is related to remuneration.

Healthcare Support Workers (HCSWs) work with, and under the direction and supervision of healthcare practitioners. Their learning and development are essential to support the valuable contribution they make to the team in providing safe, effective and person-centred care. Healthcare Science support staff are an important source of workforce supply to higher roles, so essential to their development is the opportunity to step up the career framework. A particular feature of the Healthcare Science workforce is the admission of relatively highly qualified staff into support worker roles, particularly in the laboratory service, where in some disciplines, assistant staff can progress to Biomedical Scientist registration. Routes to progression for these are well-defined and supported by the professional body[2].

---

[1] https://www.nmahpdevelopmentframework.nes.scot.nhs.uk/post-reg-framework/four-pillars-of-practice/

[2] https://www.careers.nhs.scot/explore-careers/healthcare-science/healthcare-science-support-worker-in-life-sciences/

Whilst this HCSW framework is interpreted through the **4-Pillars** of Practice developed by NMAHAP, it aligns to established Healthcare Science frameworks (Appendix 4) used in Scotland: *The [Common Core List](#)* - applicable across the Healthcare Science workforce; and *[Good Scientific Practice](#)* that specifically applies to training at all levels as part of the Modernising Scientific Careers programme, using the **4-Pillars** approach preserves alignment across the wider NHS support worker workforce.

In the context of Healthcare Science, Healthcare Science Support worker (level 2); Assistant practitioners (level 3) and Associate practitioners (level 4) support the work of Healthcare Science Practitioners, Biomedical Scientists and Clinical Scientists. They perform safe, quality assured, protocol driven, routine, technical and scientific procedures across Healthcare Science. The Healthcare Science Associate (level 4) works more independently with less direct supervision than a Healthcare Science assistant practitioner.

The **4-Pillars** recognise the complexity of roles and help to define the difference in expectations and learning between HCSWs in Career Framework levels 2, 3 and 4. It proposes, in general terms, characteristics of each level (2-4) in terms of:

- Clinical practice;
- Leadership;
- Facilitation of learning;
- Service improvement.

What depth of clinical practice does a level 2 support worker exercise compared to a level 4? How much facilitation of learning does a level 4 give compared to a level 3? Information about these pillars of practice and related learning activities are at [Support Worker Central](#). Whilst this website primarily supports role development and learning and development of NMAHP support workers in Scotland, each of its domains are applicable to the Healthcare Science support worker workforce. Appendix 4 illustrates the connection between some established Healthcare Science domains of practice, and the **4-Pillars** model used to support HCSW.

Using the NES HCS Support Worker Development Framework

The framework is designed to be used by HCS HCSWs, managers and educators in different ways.

By HCS HCSWs

- to benchmark current level of practice
- to continue to grow within current level of practice by identifying areas for development
- to guide career development and progression

- to customise a development plan
- to identify evidence to support personal development planning

By managers

- to support discussions that take place as part of the personal development planning and review process
- to inform succession planning
- to maximise skill at every level of the practice
- to support service redesign and skill mix
- to map professional development of new employees joining from another area or board or previous employment

By educators

- to plan and deliver education and training to meet the rapidly changing needs of HCSWs
- to identify opportunities for shared, inter-professional learning
- to describe how education programmes articulate with each other

The Framework also directly links to the [NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework](#) and can be used to support the annual development review cycle.

Support resources

Learning Activities

Generic learning of interest to Healthcare Science support workers is at [Support Worker Central](#) .There is a Healthcare Science specific offer at [Healthcare Science Learning](#) and information about NES Healthcare Science training management at our [training website](#)

Reflective Template

A reflective template is available to help Healthcare Science support workers reflect on their current job role and to identify areas where they may benefit from further training, education and development. This may be to enhance or develop in their current role or to support them to gather evidence to access a degree programme to become a healthcare practitioner. A Reflective Template is available on the [NMAHP Development Framework website](#).

Support for managers

Any staff mentoring or training Healthcare Science support workers are strongly recommended to undertake NES HCS Train-the-trainer learning regardless of whether the development is within a career stage or to ready for a step-up, the art of supporting any trainee is generic. A training plan template is available for Healthcare Science trainees and is common to all types. There is also additional generic information and support for managers on NMAHP's Support Worker Central.

Delegation

Patient safety is the overarching priority. Delegation of tasks to support staff ultimately relates to the delegator's registration, whether HCPC, accredited register or professional body list. Therefore, managers and supervisors need to be confident that any role delegated to support staff is within their competence. Regardless of their career stage, Healthcare Science staff need to be aware of their limits of practice and to whom to turn to for support.

Support and Supervision

It is important to know the skills and competence of all members in a team so that tasks can be delegated appropriately and safely to the right person. Regular competence reviews alongside regular appraisal meetings or personal development reviews will help support the development of individuals. It is important that all staff know the limits of their own competence and have the confidence to say "no" if asked to carry out a task beyond their competence, or that they feel is inappropriate or unsafe. Supervision and feedback must be provided appropriate to the task being delegated and Healthcare Science Support Workers should adhere to the HCSW Code of Conduct[3] at all times.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) supports the use of evidence of work-based experience and learning to support personal and career development.

RPL can help value and build on the learning achieved informally and be used to:

- build confidence and motivate staff to apply for jobs
- provide evidence to support a qualification or training course
- provide evidence towards a qualification or for a job application
- map prior learning to the HCSW Development and Education Framework if transferring from another Board area or previous employment.

---

[3] Code of Conduct for Healthcare Support Workers
https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/39548

More information can be found in the Guiding Principles of RPL, A guide for learners and a guide to support staff through the RPL process (see appendix 2)

Watch the short animation to find out more about RPL https://vimeo.com/466204716

An effective way to record learning and development is to use the Turas Learning Portfolio (Recognition of Prior Learning, RPL). The Learning Portfolio is freely available to all HCSWs who wish to use an individual electronic Portfolio to record evidence of their previous, current or new learning. Other options are available to record your learning such as hard copy and word versions.

Routes into Healthcare Science Support Workers roles

HCS HCSWs enter the role via a number of access points including school leavers, college, university, other NHS roles or from a non-NHS background. Some new HCS HCSWs may have already achieved relevant healthcare experience and/or related qualifications prior to starting in post for example:

- If a new HCS HCSW has completed a Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP) at SCQF level 6, they can progress onto an HNC programme (SCQF level 7) or decide to work as a HCS HCSW.
- New HCS HCSWs who have completed a Foundation Apprenticeship while in year 5 and 6 at High School will have gained work experience, alongside a relevant academic qualification
- A new HCS HCSW may have left a health-related degree programme early and achieved a Diploma in Higher Education / Higher National Diploma (SCQF level 8)
- A new HCS HCSW may possess a degree and be ready to step up to professional registration as a practitioner via a portfolio that can be assessed by a professional body and/or register for recognition by equivalence.

Using Recognition of Prior Learning and mapping learning against the SCQF levels helps to identify a new HCSWs starting point and their future direction.

Recording learning and development

Turas Professional portfolio

Turas Professional Portfolio (RPL) is available to all HCS HCSWs who wish to use an electronic portfolio to record evidence of their learning. Other options are available to record learning such as hard copy and word versions.

Using Professional Portfolio (RPL) is a way of recording evidence of learning and development for appraisals and career development. Professional Portfolio (RPL) can also be used to help record evidence of learning from current or previous experience gained in the workplace and through life experience, support access to courses, achieving learning credits and can support career progression.

Watch the short animation to find out the benefits of using Turas Professional Portfolio https://vimeo.com/526030333

How to register for the Turas Professional Portfolio (RPL)

For all Support Workers in Scotland including the NHS, social care, voluntary and independent sectors, you can self-register at https://turasdashboard.nes.nhs.scot//User/PersonalDetails/Create?openIdApplicationId=0c6117db-8794-474c-8596-c91798d4538a

If you have a Turas account, sign in at https://turasnmportfolio.nes.nhs.scot/

The Portfolio How to Guide is a useful guide to getting started and navigating the portfolio. A recording from the virtual event series Using the HCSW Professional Portfolio can be accessed at https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/58370

Healthcare Science Support Worker Development and Education Framework Structure

An overview page is provided for each Framework level of practice (2-4) which explains the broad sphere of responsibility/role, recommended educational/professional requirements that might be expected. The learning required at each level may vary according to the HCS HCSW role and work setting.

The generic aspects of each level of practice are then explained in detail including the sphere of responsibility/role associated with each level, and the key knowledge and skills required. The consolidation of existing knowledge and skills, and the acquisition of new ones, are reflected in the incremental nature of the Framework levels.

Abbreviations

AHCS	Academy for Healthcare Science	NC	National Certificates
CCL	Common Core List (4 domain postgraduate attributes)	NMAHPs	Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions
GSP	Good Scientific Practice (5 domain framework – UK-wide)	NMC	Nursing and Midwifery Council
HCPC	Health and Care Professions Council	NPA	National Progression Award
HCS	Healthcare Science	OU	Open University
HCSW	Healthcare Support Worker	PDA	Professional Development Award
HNC	Higher National Certificate	RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
HND	Higher National Diploma	SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
IBMS	Institute of Biomedical Science	SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualification

Role Definitions

Career Framework level	Role Title	Definition
Level 2	HCS Healthcare Support Worker	The Healthcare Support Worker works across health and integrated disciplines under the direction and professional accountability of healthcare practitioners. HCSWs carry out a range of activities which could include care, treatment, technical, scientific and/or administrative activities delegated from healthcare practitioners*, HCS Assistant practitioners or HCS Associate Practitioners. The Healthcare Support Worker will already possess or have the opportunity to attain education at SCQF level 6 within an agreed timeframe.
Level 3	HCS Assistant Practitioner	The HCS Assistant Practitioner can evidence previous experience and/or consolidation of practice as a HCSW or can evidence an appropriate level of knowledge. They will have the understanding and ability to deliver delegated care under the direction and supervision of healthcare practitioners* and support the multidisciplinary team in the delivery of high-quality care. The HCS Assistant Practitioner will possess or have the opportunity to attain education at SCQF level 7 within an agreed timeframe.
Level 4	HCS Associate Practitioner	The HCS Associate Practitioner can evidence previous experience and consolidation of practice as a HCS Assistant Practitioner and/or has the appropriate skills and knowledge and demonstrates the depth of understanding and ability required to participate in the planning and carrying out of holistic, protocol-based care under the direction and supervision of healthcare practitioners*. They will assist and support the multidisciplinary team in the delivery of high-quality care. The Assistant Practitioner will possess or have the opportunity to attain education at SCQF level 8 within an agreed timeframe.

*The term Healthcare Practitioners includes, but is not limited to, registered Biomedical Scientists, Clinical Physiologists, Clinical Technologists and other undergraduate degree-level HCS staff.

LEVEL 2: HCS Support Worker

Development Framework Level 2 – Overview

Career Framework Level	Pillars of Practice	Broad Sphere of Responsibility/Role	Qualifications and experience expected for HCSWs at this level of career framework	SCQF
LEVEL 2 HCS Support Worker	Clinical Practice Facilitation of Learning Leadership Service Improvement	The role is made up of mostly routine clinical, technical, scientific and/or administrative tasks delegated from HCS practitioners, HCS assistant practitioners or HCS Associate Practitioners Has the awareness and ability to address people's care needs with compassion, civility, kindness while working under the direction and supervision of HCS practitioners, HCS Assistant Practitioners or HCs Associate Practitioners at all times Will carry out routine and familiar activities	Normally at or working towards a SCQF Level 6 science or health or social care related subject. (See appendix 3) Equivalent experience and knowledge can be demonstrated using recognition of prior learning[4.] Numeracy and literacy qualifications are desirable at this level of practice (see appendix 3) and core skills framework at level 5. IT/computer literacy are desirable at this level of practice	Level 6

---

[4] NHS Education for Scotland (2019) Recognition of Prior Learning https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/37523/support-workforce-hub/rpl-guiding-principles

Development Framework Level 2

Career Framework Level	Pillars of Practice	Aspects of Practice	Examples of Sphere of Responsibility/Role	Key Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours
LEVEL 2 HCS Support Worker	Clinical Practice	Person-centred, safe, and effective care	**Within own practice area:** Take responsibility for routine delegated activities, within the limits of competence, guided by policies, standard operating procedures, protocols, or systems of work At all times works under the direct supervision of HCS practitioners, HCS assistant practitioners or HCS Associate Practitioners, within scope of practice Assist with the delivery of fundamental aspects of person-centred care and treatment depending on the context of scope of practice Prepare work/clinical areas and equipment, monitor environments/equipment Problem solves in relation to care or treatment delivery Follow defined processes, where available, for safety-critical tasks, seek guidance when there is ambiguity about which process to apply, and participate in defining or updating processes Effectively communicates routine information to individuals, carers, relatives and other healthcare colleagues, adapting communication skills to ensure	**Ability to:** Develop knowledge and skills required to deliver safe, person-centred care effectively. Develop knowledge of routine investigations, procedures, technical or administrative activities Develop knowledge of standard operating procedures and protocols Adheres to the HCSW Code of Conduct[5] in relation to consent – "3.2.8 – telling patients and members of the public what you intend to do and listening carefully to what they say about it". Recognise risk in relation to scope of practice Understand it is everyone's responsibility (HCSW Code of Conduct 3.2.11) to protect individuals, members of the public and report any concerns to a supervisor, manager or make use of the

---

[5] Healthcare Support Worker Code of Conduct
https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/39548

			compassionate and sensitive person-centred approaches

Maintains clear and concise communication and clinical record keeping/documentation including digital records

Recognises change and/or concerns in a person's condition/care and/or treatment and reports and/or escalates any changes to a healthcare practitioner and/or assistant practitioner

Recognise and act on health and safety issues

Perform correct hand hygiene procedure and other infection prevention and control measures as per national and local policies | whistleblowing policy to reduce risks in the future

Have an awareness of and comply with core legislation and policies:

✦ Infection control policies and procedures
✦ Appropriate standards for confidentiality, records and record-keeping
✦ Data Protection Act, Caldicott Guidelines and local policies regarding confidentiality and access to medical records.
✦ HCSW Code of Conduct and Induction Standards
✦ Health and safety
✦ Moving and handling
✦ Standard infection control precautions
✦ COSHH regulations
✦ Risk management
✦ Equality and diversity policies
✦ Safeguarding legislation and policies
  Signs of harm and abuse
  What to do if you suspect harm or abuse
✦ Whistleblowing policy

Have awareness of and comply with legislation, and policies specific to area of practice

Understand and apply the concepts of accountability and responsibility and be confident to accept or decline delegated responsibility from a HCS practitioner, HCS |

				assistant practitioner or HCS Associate Practitioner

Career Framework Level	Pillars of Practice	Aspects of Practice	Examples of Sphere of Responsibility/Role	Key Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours
LEVEL 2 HCS Support Worker	Facilitation of Learning	Learning, Teaching and Assessment	**Within own practice area:** Ensure person centred, safe and effective care is at the forefront of learning by sharing knowledge and information with those new to the practice area and/ or new to role e.g., other HCS practitioners, students Develop and maintain own knowledge and skills to provide person-centred care, supporting safe and effective service provision, with direction from HCS practitioners, senior HCSWs or assistant practitioners Practice within the boundaries of role, and seeking support where necessary, facilitate learning for individuals, families and carers, peers and/or others e.g., students	**Ability to:** Learn from experience through observation, supervision, feedback, reflective practice techniques and evaluation Acquire an understanding of the HCSW role in relation to learning and development for others

Career Framework Level	Pillars of Practice	Aspects of Practice	Examples of Sphere of Responsibility/Role	Key Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours
LEVEL 2 HCS Support Worker	Leadership	Teamwork and Development	**Within own practice area:** Act as a positive role model at all times Support own team and wider multidisciplinary/multi- agency team in the delivery of high-quality care	**Ability to:** Develop organisational and time-management skills in relation to prioritising workload Recognise role boundaries and limitations

			Understand how the HCSW role contributes to the teams' vision, values, and objectives	Participate in team and multidisciplinary team development
			Undertake delegated activities and use own initiative within the context of role and remit	Recognise opportunities to problem-solve
			Seek out and receive feedback	Appreciate the equality and diversity needs of individuals and colleagues
				Develop an awareness of the impact of leadership activities in relation to compassion, civility, kindness and human factors

Career Framework Level	Pillars of Practice	Aspects of Practice	Examples of Sphere of Responsibility/Role	Key Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours
LEVEL 2 HCS Support Worker	Service Improvement	Guidelines and evidence-based practice	**Within own practice area:** Follow guidelines under the direction of a HCS practitioner, HCS Assistant Practitioner or HCs Associate Practitioner Participate in quality improvement activities and data collection relevant to own work area and within sphere of competence Record or report incidents or near misses Identify instructions or steps in established processes that cannot be followed in practice, report these to supervisors or through established reporting mechanisms, and participate in resolving the issue.	**Ability to:** Develop knowledge and skills in using information technology systems to access resources e.g., policies, relevant publications Reflect on and discuss own practice and identify potential areas for improvement in own role/service delivery Appreciate risk in relation to scope of practice and service improvement Recognise quality improvement methodologies and how they are used in practice

LEVEL 3: HCS Assistant Practitioner

Development Framework Level 3 – Overview

Career Framework Level	Pillars of Practice	Broad Sphere of Responsibility/Role	Qualifications and experience expected for practitioners at this level of career framework	SCQF
LEVEL 3 HCS Assistant Practitioner	Clinical Practice Facilitation of Learning Leadership Service Improvement	Deliver delegated care, treatment or intervention with compassion, civility and kindness, under the direct supervision of a HCS practitioner; or HCS Associate Practitioner Contribute to own team and the multidisciplinary/multi-agency team in the delivery of high-quality care Work within local policies and guidelines	Can evidence previous knowledge and relevant experience using Recognition of Prior learning (see appendix 2). Normally at or working towards a SCQF Level 7 qualification in a science, health or social care related subject (see appendix 3). Numeracy and literacy qualifications are required at this level of practice (see appendix 3) and core skills at Level 6 IT/computer literacy are required at this level of practice	Level 7

Career Development Framework Level 3

Career Framework Level	Pillars of Practice	Aspects of Practice	Examples of Sphere of Responsibility/Role	Key Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours
LEVEL 3 HCS Assistant Practitioner	Clinical Practice	Person centred, Safe and effective care	**Within own practice area:** Following initial assessment by a HCS practitioner*, can plan, prioritise and adapt practices, taking responsibility for assigned activities, including defined clinical or therapeutic interventions or technological support within the plan of care/care plan and limits of competence, guided by legislation, standard operating procedures, protocols or systems of work Work under the direct supervision from HCS practitioners and/or HCS Associate Practitioners in the delivery of scope of practice Demonstrate effective infection prevention and control measures as per local and national policies and procedures Communicate both routine and sensitive information to people receiving care, carers, relatives and other healthcare professionals/services/agencies with sensitive and compassionate person-centred approaches Work as part of a multidisciplinary/multiagency team Provide accurate information and support to people receiving care/carers that enables informed choice Understand factors that contribute to and impacts on mental health and wellbeing and actively promotes health improvement and promotion and support positive behaviour change	Will have a broad skill base related to their practice Will have a breadth and depth of understanding of role and related activities beyond that of a level 2 HCS Support Worker

			Identify concerns and/or recognise change in a person's condition, using knowledge and skills to understand the situation and promptly report and/or escalate any changes to an HCS practitioner and/or assistant practitioner	Adheres to the HCSW [Code of Conduct][6] in relation to consent – "3.2.8 – telling patients and members of the public what you intend to do and listening carefully to what they say about it".
			Carry out delegated aspects of care, treatment or intervention as detailed in the individuals' plan of care	Understand it is everyone's responsibility (HCSW Code of Conduct 3.2.11) to protect individuals, members of the public and report any concerns to a supervisor, manager or make use of the whistleblowing policy to reduce risks in the future
			Problem solve and take action regarding person centred care or service provision taking into account input from the person, family, carers and other relevant people, feeding back to the HCS practitioner	Has all the attributes, skills and knowledge required for a HCs Assistant Practitioner and ability to:
			Demonstrate knowledge and understanding and contribute to person centred assessments	**Understands and applies knowledge of: -**
			Demonstrate knowledge and skills in providing person centred, safe and effective care, treatment or intervention for people, in collaboration with families and carers	✦ Infection control policies and procedures
			Recognise and act on health and safety issues	✦ Appropriate standards for confidentiality, records and record-keeping including digital records
			Follow defined processes, where available, for safety-critical tasks, seek guidance when there is ambiguity about which process to apply, and participate in defining or updating processes	✦ Data Protection Act, Caldicott Guidelines and local policies regarding confidentiality and access to medical records.
			Following completion of appropriate training and in line with local, national, and regulatory guidelines and policy,	✦ HCSW Code of Conduct and Induction Standards ✦ Health and safety ✦ Moving and handling
			Carry out routine and familiar care interventions relevant to scope of practice	✦ Standard infection control precautions ✦ COSHH regulations ✦ Risk management

			Maintains clear and concise communication and clinical record keeping/documentation including digital records, and support others to use digital systems and platforms e.g., email, electronic patient records	✦ Equality and diversity policies
				✦ Safeguarding legislation and policies
				   Signs of harm and abuse
				   What to do if you suspect harm or abuse
				✦ Whistleblowing policy

			Understand and follow local process and procedure in reporting incidents and adverse effects	Understand and applies knowledge of legislation, and policies specific to area of practice
			Understand risk and adhere to local policies, protocols and guidelines e.g., workforce policies, clinical policies and guidance	Recognise risk in relation to scope of practice and further develop risk assessment skills
				Act on findings within role boundaries to ensure a person's safety
			Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of administrative and technical activities required in the practice area e.g., maintaining stock levels, ordering equipment	Develop knowledge of infection prevention and control
				Able to effectively reflect on and in practice
				Understand and apply the concepts of accountability and responsibility and be confident to accept or decline delegated responsibility from a HCS practitioner or HCs Associate practitioner

❖ *It is recognised that there may be some specific roles where an initial assessment is carried out by a Senior HCSW or Assistant Practitioner

Career Framework Level	Pillars of Practice	Aspects of Practice	Examples of Sphere of Responsibility/Role	Key Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours
LEVEL 3 HCS Assistant Practitioner	Facilitation of Learning	Learning, Teaching and Assessment	**Within own practice area:** Ensure person centred, safe and effective care is at the forefront of learning by sharing knowledge and information with those new to the practice area and/ or new to role e.g., other healthcare practitioners, students Reflect on and in practice to identify areas of personal development Within the boundaries of role and seeking support where necessary, facilitate learning for individuals, families and carers Support the practice and development needs of HCSWs within the remit of own role by mentoring and facilitating learning e.g., skills development such as personal care	**Ability to:** Develop and maintain own knowledge and skills to provide person centred, safe and effective care with support from a HCS practitioner or Assistant Practitioner Has an awareness of methods to ensure learning has taken place, e.g., 4-stage approach to teaching a clinical skill, or use of Chunk & Check/Teach Back[7]

[7] https://www.gov.scot/publications/making-easy-progress-against-actions/pages/4/

Career Framework Level	Pillars of Practice	Aspects of Practice	Examples of Sphere of Responsibility/Role	Key Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours
LEVEL 3 HCS assistant practitioner	Leadership	Teamwork and Development	**Within own practice area:** Act as a positive role model at all times Develop self-awareness behaving in a manner to build resilience e.g., self-reliance, relationship building, self-care and adaptability Contribute to the teams' vision, values and objectives Undertake delegated activities and use own initiative within the context of role and remit Give, seek out and receive feedback in an open, honest and constructive manner Plan and prioritise own work and activities Contribute to effective team working by influencing, negotiating and communicating with others Demonstrate organisational and time management skills	**Ability to:** Recognise and understand role boundaries and limitations whilst working Participate in multidisciplinary team development Develop a solution focused approach to problems and take appropriate action Demonstrate awareness of equality and diversity needs of individuals and colleagues Has an awareness of the impact of leadership activities in relation to compassion, civility, kindness and human factors

LEVEL 3 HCS assistant practitioner	Service Improvement	Guidelines and evidence-based practice	Within own practice area: Contribute to the development of local protocols and guidelines Undertake data collection and feedback results e.g., audits or surveys Assist with quality improvement or research initiatives and activities Suggest ideas for quality and/or service improvement within scope of practice Identify instructions or steps in established processes that cannot be followed in practice, report these to supervisors or through established reporting mechanisms, and participate in resolving the issue	Ability to: Apply knowledge and skills in using information technology systems to access resources e.g., clinical guidelines and policies, relevant publications Effectively reflect on and discuss own practice Identify risk in relation to care provision and service improvement Has an awareness of quality improvement methodologies

LEVEL 4: HCS Associate Practitioner

Development Framework Level 4 – Overview

Career Framework Level	Pillars of Practice	Broad sphere of Responsibility/ Role	Qualifications and experience expected for practitioners at this level of career framework	SCQF
LEVEL 4 HCS Associate Practitioner	Clinical Practice Facilitation of Learning Leadership Service Improvement	Has developed clinical/scientific/technical skills which are more specialised than HCS Assistant Practitioners and specific to an area of practice' Actively involved in supporting others to learn, for example HCS Support workers; assistant practitioners and students Expected to have strong leadership and service improvement skills, for example working on improvement projects such as information for people receiving care, liaising with other departments and services Deliver less routine delegated activities care, treatment, interventions or support for people receiving care with compassion, civility and kindness, indirectly supervised by HCS practitioners as part of a multi-professional/multi-agency team. This will be dependent on an individual's needs and area of practice relevant to scope of practice	Can evidence previous relevant experience using Recognition of Prior Learning (see appendix 2) Normally at or working towards a SCQF Level 8 qualification in a health or social care related subject (See appendix 3) At this level specific training, guidance or qualifications may be required by relevant professional bodies or legislation Numeracy and literacy qualifications are required at this level of practice (see appendix 3) IT/computer literacy are required at this level of practice	Level 8

Career Development Framework Level 4

Career Framework Level	Pillars of Practice	Aspects of Practice	Examples of Sphere of Responsibility/Role	Key Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours
LEVEL 4 HCS Associate Practitioner	Clinical Practice	Person-centred safe, effective and care	**Within own practice area:** Following the initial assessment by a HCS practitioner*, take responsibility for planned, assigned care or treatment including defined clinical or therapeutic interventions or technological support within the care environment, recognising and understanding role boundaries and limitations Working within current evidence base, agreed protocols and guidelines, adapt approaches and activities regarding area of work under the direct supervision of a HCS practitioner Carry out routine elements of an individual's assessment, treatment or intervention following protocols and evidence-based practice, guidelines/protocols and evaluate outcomes (actual or potential) Within the boundaries of the role, are able to use own initiative and utilise knowledge and skills at a more complex level than a HCS Assistant Practitioner Demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills related to needs and activities and take action within the agreed parameters of the role Apply knowledge of infection prevention and control, leading by example and supporting others to comply with infection prevention and control policies	Has an in-depth knowledge and understanding of scope of practice, job role and related activities Has a comprehensive skill base related to practice. Any interventions carried out will be achieved through additional, focused training and education

				Apply knowledge and skill related to undertaking/assisting as directed with specific complex interventions and procedures	Adheres to the HCSW Code of Conduct[9] in relation to consent – "3.2.8 – telling patients and members of the public what you intend to do and listening carefully to what they say about it".
				Develop and maintain own knowledge and skills to provide safe and effective person-centred care with direction from a HCS practitioner and can support others to do so	Understand it is everyone's responsibility (HCSW Code of Conduct 3.2.11) to protect individuals, members of the public and report any concerns to a supervisor, manager or make use of the whistleblowing policy to reduce risks in the future
				Provide accurate information and adapt communication approaches which support individuals and carers to make informed choices	**Ability to:** Apply knowledge and demonstrate appropriate understanding of: -
				Understand and act on factors that contribute to and impact on wellbeing and actively promote health improvement/promotion, understanding health inequalities and the impact on health outcomes	✦ Infection control policies and procedures ✦ Appropriate standards for confidentiality, records and record-keeping ✦ Data Protection Act, Caldicott Guidelines and local policies regarding confidentiality and access to medical records.
				Recognise and respond to change and/or concerns in a person's condition/care and/or treatment, using knowledge and skill to understand the situation and promptly report and/or escalate any changes to a HCS practitioner	✦ HCSW Code of conduct and Induction Standards ✦ Health and safety ✦ Moving and handling ✦ Standard infection control precautions ✦ COSHH regulations ✦ Risk management
				Recognise and respond to issues with equipment or the environment	✦ Equality and diversity policies ✦ Safeguarding legislation and policies Signs of harm and abuse What to do if you suspect harm or abuse
				Communicate both routine and complex/sensitive information to individuals, carers, relatives and other healthcare professionals/services/agencies using a range of effective communication methods including health literacy approaches to ensure	✦ Whistleblowing policy

---

[9] Healthcare Support Worker Code of Conduct
https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/39548

			compassionate and sensitive person-centred approaches. Understand the communication needs of others and adapts communication accordingly Plan and prioritise activities and duties in consultation with HCS practitioners and use a framework to support decision making when delegating interventions and activities Provide person centred, safe and effective care, that is responsive to individual preferences, needs and values, ensuring consent is given to proceed. Problem solves and takes action regarding individuals care or technical complications through awareness/understanding of policy and legislation	Understand and apply knowledge of legislation, and policies specific to area of practice Develop knowledge on how and why care provision and that of others in the multidisciplinary /multi-agency team, impacts on the person's journey Demonstrate risk assessment skills in relation to the person receiving care Demonstrate application of best practice within the practice setting Demonstrate underpinning knowledge that enables integration of theory relating to practice in relevant settings Understand and apply the concepts of accountability and responsibility and be confident to accept or decline delegated responsibility from a HCS practitioner

			Following completion of appropriate training and in line with local, national, and regulatory guidelines and policy,[8]	
			Demonstrate and apply knowledge and skills in providing person centred, safe and effective care, treatment or intervention in collaboration with families and carers	
			Identify and measure the impact of conditions/care needs on individuals/family/carers and can support the implementation of strategies/tools to facilitate effective self-management, sign posting or providing information	
			Maintain clear and concise communication and clinical record keeping/documentation including digital records, and is proficient in using and supporting others to use digital systems and platforms e.g., email, electronic patient records	
			Understand, follow and apply local process and procedure in reporting incidents and adverse effects	
			Understand risk and adhere to local policies, protocols and guidelines, supporting others to do likewise e.g., workforce policies, clinical policies and guidance	
			Follow defined processes, where available, for safety-critical tasks, seek guidance when there is ambiguity about which process to apply, and participate in defining or updating processes	
			Recognise and act on health and safety issues	

[8] National training is under development and until this is available, please refer to the Resource guide to support the safe administration of medicines by HCSWs and Carers in health and social care settings (CNOD Dec 21)

			Demonstrate, apply and share knowledge and understanding of clinical, scientific, administrative and technical activities required in the practice area	

❖ *it is recognised that there may be some specific roles where an initial assessment is carried out by a Senior HCSW or Assistant Practitioner

Career Framework Level	Pillars of Practice	Aspects of Practice	Examples of Sphere of Responsibility/Role	Key Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours
LEVEL 4 HCS Associate Practitioner	Facilitation of Learning	Learning, Teaching and Assessment	**Within own practice area:** Be responsible and accountable for keeping own knowledge and skills up to date through reflective practice and continuing professional development Within the boundaries of role, and seeking support where necessary, facilitate learning for individuals, families and carers Supporting/supervising/education of activities that are within the scope of the HCS Associate Practitioner roles. Promote a positive learning environment by participating in the support and experience of all learners Act as a positive role model to others Give, ask for and receive feedback in an open, honest and constructive manner to facilitate learning and development for all learners	Ability to: Use reflection to enhance self-awareness, gain new insights and develop resilience when faced with adverse situations Recognise the personal impact of any difficult situations and have strategies to enable personal learning and development, recognising the limits of competence and personal strengths Demonstrate application of a variety of methods to ensure learning has taken place, e.g., 4 stage approach to teaching a clinical skill, or use of Chunk & Check/Teach Back

Career Framework Level	Pillars of Practice	Aspects of Practice	Examples of Sphere of Responsibility/Role	Key Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours
LEVEL 4 HCS Associate Practitioner	Leadership	Teamwork and Development	**Within own practice area:** Act as a positive role model at all times Contribute to team, multi-professional/multi agency working, actively promoting, participating and respecting the contribution of others Develop effective team working skills and can negotiate with and influence others Contribute to team objectives in relation to leading service development initiatives	**Ability to:** Work effectively in a multi-disciplinary/multiagency team and participate in team development initiatives Demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills and take action through an awareness of policy and legislation Demonstrate effective organisational and time management skills practice in an anti-discriminatory and inclusive manner with individuals and colleagues Demonstrate and apply an understanding of the impact of leadership theories and activities in relation to compassion, civility, kindness and human factors

Career Framework Level	Pillars of Practice	Aspects of Practice	Examples of Sphere of Responsibility/Role	Key Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours
LEVEL 4 HCS Associate Practitioner	Service Improvement	Guidelines and evidence-based practice	**Within own practice area:** Contribute to the design, development, implementation and evaluation of service and quality improvement initiatives and range of quality assurance activities, including involvement in data collection Access, assess and apply relevant guidelines Apply knowledge and skills in using information technology systems Identify instructions or steps in established processes that cannot be followed in practice, report these to supervisors or through established reporting mechanisms, and participate in resolving the issue	Ability to: Understand and apply evidence-based practice and identify and assesses risk Demonstrate and apply knowledge of relevant guidelines Recognise the importance of responding to individuals' feedback and comments appropriately including resolving complaints in a timely manner and effectively at local level, escalating as appropriate Demonstrate effective application of quality improvement methodologies and tools Identify risk in relation to care provision and service improvement

Appendix 1: Career Framework Model

Key elements of the Career Framework for Health

Career Framework Level 9
Indicative or reference title: Director

Career Framework Level 8
Indicative or reference title: Consultant

Career Framework Level 7
Indicative or reference title: Advanced Practitioner

Career Framework Level 6
Indicative or reference title: Specialist/Senior Practitioner

Career Framework Level 5
Indicative or reference title: Practitioner

Career Framework Level 4
Indicative or reference title: Assistant/Associate Practitioner

Career Framework Level 3
Indicative or reference title: Senior Support Worker

Career Framework Level 2
Indicative or reference title: Support Worker

Career Framework Level 1
Indicative or reference title: Cadet

Taken with Permission from the Scottish Government Workforce Directorate "Guidance to NHS Boards on the Career Framework for Health" 11 March 2009 (Annex 2).

Note: This diagram is an adaptation of the version on the Skills for Health website and from the one formally launched in 2006.

These adaptations are simply to reflect generally recognised terms in Scotland, which may differ from those used elsewhere in the UK. They do not affect the substance of the Career Framework or represent a departure from the Career Framework launched in 2006.

Full descriptors for each level can be found in the Skills for Health website example.

Appendix 2: RPL Guiding Principles

Recognition of Prior Learning (PRL) means that you can get recognition for learning done in a work-based environment and learning from life experience to support your career development. These guiding principles provide a consistent approach to Recognition of Prior Learning for NHSScotland boards, and underpinned by the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and NHSScotland Staff Governance Standards.

RPL is a Five Step Process:

1. Initial Guidance
2. Identification
3. Gathering & Documentation of Evidence
4. Assessment of Evidence
5. Recognition / Progression

Access the Recognition of Prior learning Guiding principles at https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/37523

Supporting resources

Recognition of Prior Learning: a guide for learners

https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/37526/support-workforce-hub/rpl-user-guide

Recognition of Prior Learning: A guide to support staff through the RPL process

https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/37525/support-workforce-hub/rpl-managers-guide

Recognition of Prior Learning animation

https://vimeo.com/466204716/146e8ceeb5

Appendix 3: SCQF Level related qualifications as at March 2024

SCQF Level 6	SCQF Level 7	SCQF Level 8	Literacy and Numeracy
• SVQ Healthcare Support (clinical) • SVQ Social Services & Healthcare Modern Apprenticeships -Health Care Support (Clinical) -Social Services & Healthcare	• SVQ Healthcare Support (Clinical) • SVQ Social Services & Healthcare • SVQ Health and Social Care (children & young people) • HNC Healthcare Practice • HNC Social services • HNC Childhood Practice • Certificate of Higher Education Maternity Care Assistant Programme • Certificate of Higher Education Radiographic Studies • PDA Rehabilitation Technologies • HNC Occupational Therapy Support • PDA Promoting Positive Behaviour • PDA Promoting Excellence in Dementia Skilled Practice • PDA Developing Professional Practice in Health & Social Care • PDA Certificate in Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorder • PDA Brief Interventions for Substance Misuse	• PDA Occupational Therapy Support • PDA Perioperative Practice • PDA Acute and Community Care • PDA Health and Social Care: Personalisation in Practice • PDA Health and Social Care: Promoting Enhanced Professional Practice • PDA Healthcare Professionals: Facilitating Learning, Training and Assessment in the Workplace • PDA Podiatry Support • HNC Childhood Practice • OU - Diploma of Higher Education in Health and Social Care • Higher Education Diploma Wellbeing & Enablement	Career Framework Level 2 • Numeracy and literacy qualifications are desirable at this level of practice Career Framework Level 3 • Numeracy and literacy qualifications are required at this level of practice - Normally at or working towards Maths / Numeracy at SCQF Level 5 as well as Literacy / English / Communication qualifications are required at SCQF level 6 Career Framework Level 4 • Numeracy and literacy qualifications are required at this level of practice - Normally achieved Maths / Numeracy at SCQF Level 5 as well as Literacy / English / Communication qualifications are required at SCQF Level 6

	• PDA Health and Social Care: Administration of Medicine • OU - K102 -Introducing Health and Social Care • OU - Certificate of Higher Education in Healthcare Practice • OU - K104, Introduction to healthcare practice **Modern Apprenticeships** - Health Care Support (Clinical) Social Services & Healthcare		

Appendix 4: Mapping the HCSW 4-Pillars model with Healthcare Science frameworks

This mapping shows how the HCSW 4-Pillar model relates to existing Healthcare Science frameworks. Good Scientific Practice (GSP) is central to the Scientist Training programme for postgraduate Clinical Scientists and graduate-level practitioners across the UK. The Common Core List (CCL) of attributes was developed in partnership with service by NES in 2011 and is used primarily to inform postgraduate development. Both CCL and GSP at explained further at https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/58291

Good Scientific Practice

Professional Practice

The Common Core List

Delivery of the Science

HCSW 4-Pillar Model

Clinical Practice

Scientific Practice	Safety and Improvement	
Clinical Practice		
Research and Development and Innovation	The Future	**Service Improvement**
Clinical Leadership	People and Organisation	**Leadership; Facilitating Learning**

The purpose of Good Scientific Practice - extract from [AHCS handbook – GSP 2021](#) page 3:

Patients are the number one priority and their safety in all settings where the Healthcare Science workforce operate is paramount. The purpose of Good Scientific Practice (GSP) is to set out the professional standards on which safe and good working practice is founded for all those in the Healthcare Science workforce. GSP also confirms to employers the standards of behaviour and practice that all members of the Healthcare Science workforce must be supported to achieve and maintain, both in the NHS and all other sectors and settings. The standards are essential for all members of the workforce to perform their job role activities; provide safe, effective patient care; and demonstrate their professionalism. GSP uses the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) Standards of Proficiency for Clinical Scientists and Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics as its benchmarks. It also draws on other regulatory and professional body standards and expresses them within the context of the Healthcare Science.

[The Common Core List](#) - extract

CCL identifies shared attributes for NHS scientists, across four broad domains: scientific practice; leadership and management; safety and improvement; the future. CCL does not specify the format, level or content of development within the domains. Instead, it challenges trainees to consider their wider development as a future scientist-leader.