HCSW Learning Framework
Manager’s Guide

“Valuing the contribution Healthcare Support Workers make to delivering safe, effective and person centred care across NHSScotland”
I am delighted to introduce the Healthcare Support Worker (HCSW) Learning Framework for clinical HCSWs developed by NHS Education for Scotland as part of the “Everyone Matters: 2020 Workforce Vision” resources.

Clinical HCSWs play an extremely valuable role in teams, and their learning and development is very important. This framework values the contribution of HCSW and promotes learning which will support safe, effective and person-centred care.”

Caroline Lamb, Chief Executive
Healthcare Support Worker Learning Framework

What is the HCSW Learning Framework?

The HCSW Learning Framework is a new framework to support increased access to learning and development for clinical healthcare support workers (HCSW) in nursing, midwifery and allied health professions. It aims to bring clarity and consistency to how we develop clinical healthcare support workers across NHSScotland and is designed to complement the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (NHS KSF). NHS Education for Scotland (NES) recognises that for role development to be safe, effective and person-centred, it must be underpinned by learning and development which supports people to have the right skills, in the right place, at the right time. “Everyone Matters: 2020 Workforce Vision” commits to increasing access to learning and development for the support workforce, and this framework is one of the resources to help NHS Boards achieve the 2020 Workforce Vision.

Developing HCSW roles takes time and careful planning. In our experience, time invested will pay dividends and can have a positive “ripple effect” across the team. The whole team can be more efficient as registered staff can be freed up from routine tasks to deal with more complex cases. HCSW role development works best when it is planned, communicated across the team and underpinned by the right learning to make it safe. There is compelling evidence that learning is good for teams and will lead to better outcomes for the people we care for and treat on a daily basis.

The HCSW Learning Framework can support managers to explore common questions, including:

- Am I clear about the differences between HCSW roles at Band 2, 3 and 4?
- How can I support meaningful KSF and Personal Development Plans discussions with my support workers?
- What skill mix is right for my team, and the service I lead?
- What qualifications are available for my staff?
- What can I do as a manager to help staff engage with learning?
The HCSW Learning Framework is made up of four component parts – all of which can be used individually at different stages of HCSW role development, all resources can be accessed via our new website for healthcare support workers *Support Worker Central*

- **The 4 Pillars of Practice for HCSWs**
- **Qualifications Search**
  - Support for NHS KSF Personal Development Plans
  - Mandatory Induction Standards for Healthcare Support Workers (new staff only)

The learning journey for the support workforce in NHSScotland begins with the Mandatory Induction Standards (for new starts only). The Mandatory Induction Standards is the framework for specific “on the job induction” for new employees. Completing the Induction Standards ensures that all new NHS employees understand their responsibility in carrying out their role in a way that is safe, effective and person-centred.

What makes learning good for healthcare support workers?

NES have listened to healthcare support workers, their managers and KSF reviewers for some time now through on-line surveys, national events and our HCSW Advisory Group. We have heard that work-based learning is a good experience for clinical healthcare support workers when:

- It directly supports improving the experience of people and their families
- The learning is practical and can be related directly to the job
- Learning is done with peers (meeting with other healthcare support workers is incredibly supportive and valuable)
- Good information about relevant qualifications is available
- The learning is not entirely done on-line and is free from jargon
- The learning is in bite sized pieces
- On-going support is available to put new skills into practice
How does the HCSW Learning Framework relate to other frameworks?

NHS Education for Scotland recognises that there are already many frameworks in place, and that it can be confusing for staff. Therefore the HCSW Learning Framework has been developed to work alongside these existing frameworks:

1. The Career Framework for Health which defines the level of a post
2. Agenda for Change Job Evaluation which defines the pay band of a post
3. NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) which defines the skills a person needs
4. The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) which defines the academic level of qualifications in Scotland along with the number of hours of study required.

Making sense of how the frameworks relate to each other:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Framework Level</th>
<th>Agenda for Change Pay Band (most common)</th>
<th>Knowledge and Skills Framework</th>
<th>Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Level</th>
<th>Example of common Qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 4 - Associate or Assistant Practitioner</td>
<td>Band 4 post</td>
<td>Core Dimensions 1-6 plus relevant Health and well-being dimensions</td>
<td>Level 7 - 8</td>
<td>Higher National Certificate / Diploma (HNC/D) Professional Development Award (PDA) at Level 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3 Senior Healthcare Support Worker</td>
<td>Band 3 post</td>
<td>Core Dimensions 1-6 plus relevant Health and well-being dimensions</td>
<td>Level 6 - 7</td>
<td>HNC at Level 7 / SQA Level 3 / PDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 Healthcare Support Worker</td>
<td>Band 2 Post</td>
<td>Core Dimensions 1-6 plus relevant Health and well-being dimensions</td>
<td>Level 5 - 6</td>
<td>SQA Level 2 / National Progression Award (NPA)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It makes sense to adapt the NMAHP Post-Registration Career Framework to meet the learning needs of HCSWs. The rationale for this was to develop guidance which reflects:

- HCSW role clarity
- Consistency around progression
- Team working
- Safe delegation underpinned by education

All roles are made up of 4 inter-related “pillars”. For HCSWs there are a couple of changes to the description of the 4 Pillars to reflect HCSWs roles more clearly.

Each level of post in the HCSW Learning Framework is represented visually below to show the differing expectations across the 4 Pillars of Practice. All roles will naturally have a strong clinical skills pillar, but these will increase in complexity at higher bands and may be carried out in a range of settings. There will be greater expectation to help others learn and to be involved in service improvement at Bands 3 and 4.
Role Clarity and meaningful Personal Development Plans (PDPs)

The most important starting point in the HCSW Learning Framework is to be clear about the HCSW role, its boundaries and relationships to others in the team. Role clarity will help reduce anxiety about role blurring and delegation, and will help the whole team work effectively together. Role clarity tends not to come in a template, a job description or list of skills and competences, although these are part of the overall package. In our experience it is best achieved through thinking carefully and discussing sensitively who is best placed to deliver care and treatment at each stage of a person’s healthcare experience.

The HCSW Learning Framework can be useful in opening up discussions about expectations of staff as roles change and develop. For very experienced staff, a meaningful PDP could include getting involved in a team audit, or helping new staff to settle into the team. Thinking about what each team member can do to support the whole service will open up ideas and possibilities.

The 4 Pillars of Practice can bring clarity to the difference expectations between staff in Band 2, 3 and 4 roles. It can also be used prior to and during NHS KSF Personal Development Planning to explore areas for development. For example, getting involved in a service improvement project, collecting patient safety data, or supporting new healthcare support workers to complete the Mandatory Induction Standards. As healthcare support workers spend much of their time with people and their families, they are really well-placed to notice and suggest areas for improvement.
Using three key questions to prepare for the PDP discussion can help;

1. What matters to this person in their role?
2. What have they done well, or enjoyed doing this year?
3. What do I want them to achieve, and does this match what they want to achieve?

We know that HCSWs are frontline staff who make an important contribution to delivering safe, effective and person-centred care. Managers and team leaders can use parts of the HCSW Learning Framework individually or in combinations at all stages of HCSW role development, from induction to progression. There are more examples and resources for managers to draw upon in the following websites HCSW Toolkit, the Leading Better Care resources, Effective Practitioner learning resources, and the Senior AHP Framework

Developing the HCSW Learning Framework – our story

NHS Education for Scotland (NES) first published guidance on Healthcare Support Workers role development and education in 2010. This guidance set out three job titles and recommended levels of learning

- Healthcare Support Worker (Band 2) learning at SCQF Level 5 - 6
- Senior Healthcare Support Worker (Band 3) learning at SCQF Level 6-7
- Assistant Practitioner (Band 4) learning at SCQF Level 7-8

In 2012, we reviewed how this guidance worked in practice and came up with some key recommendations;

- To create two versions of the guidance, one for managers and one for support workers
- To make sure all NHSScotland staff know about the guidance
- To make any new guidance flexible and able to meet the needs of the future workforce.
In 2014, NES were tasked by the Scottish Government to develop a national framework for all support staff to increase access to learning and development for support workers, including qualifications. We worked with many of our partner organisations including the Scottish Government, NHS Boards, Scottish Social Services Council, Scottish Qualifications Authority and Further and Higher Education providers, to make sure this framework meets the needs of current and future healthcare support staff. We listened to our HCSW Advisory Group, to healthcare support workers and their managers, to KSF reviewers and colleagues to understand what will help deliver the actions set out in the national workforce development policy “Everyone Matters; 2020 Workforce Vision”.

Lots of conversations took place ……

- We held – 4 Engagement Workshops, attended by 150 staff
- We tested the developing framework with HCSWs in NHS Lothian, NHS Grampian and NHS Fife to make sure it was relevant and user-friendly
- We worked with Senior Charge Nurses in Royal Aberdeen Children’s Hospital to make sure team leaders could use the framework to develop their teams.
- We worked with learning providers to review all the accredited learning available in Scotland – from this we created a Qualifications Search and Qualifications Map.
- We held two national HCSW Learning Events attended by over 250 support workers
- We launched Support Worker Central as a one stop shop for information about learning

The most important aspect of the HCSW Learning Framework now is how it is used in practice. If you would like advice or support to implement the HCSW Learning Framework please contact the HCSW Team; hcsw@nes.scot.nhs.uk