

STANDARDS FOR NURSING ASSISTANTS

EMPLOYED BY HSC TRUSTS
IN NORTHERN IRELAND



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Máinnystrie O Poustie

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FOREWORD

Nursing Assistants are an essential part of the healthcare team. They provide a vital role supporting the registered nursing workforce to deliver high quality nursing care. Mandating these Standards across the HSC will serve to recognise and support the valued contribution made by this cohort of staff.

The Department of Health commissioned these Standards for Nursing Assistants employed by Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland, and wishes to acknowledge the role of the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council and the Working Group established to lead the development of these Nursing Assistant Standards and associated resources in partnership with the HSC.

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Introduction

These Standards are for all Nursing Assistants employed in Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts across Northern Ireland. A Nursing Assistant is someone who undertakes delegated aspects of nursing care and is supervised by a Registered Nurse. The Department of Health (DoH) and HSC Trusts have a duty and a responsibility to protect and improve the health and wellbeing of people who use our services. Nursing Assistants will be supported by their employers to adhere to these Standards in order to deliver person-centred, safe, effective and compassionate care, across all healthcare settings.

Nursing Assistants make a valuable and important contribution to the delivery of high quality, person-centred healthcare. They have a responsibility and a duty of care to ensure their conduct does not fall below these Standards and that no act or omission, within the sphere of their role, harms the safety and wellbeing of people who use our services.

Department of Health Mandate

The DoH fully endorses the Standards for Nursing Assistants and requires that they be implemented and enforced across all HSC Trusts. HSC Trusts must monitor the implementation of the Standards and take action where concerns have been raised. The Department will monitor and seek assurances from Trusts regarding implementation. The Standards are consistent with and complement the overarching Code of Conduct for HSC Employees (DoH, 2016).

Purpose

This document presents the Standards of care, conduct and behaviours required of Nursing Assistants and informs employers, colleagues, people who use our services and the public about these. The Standards form part of employers' existing policies and procedures which Nursing Assistants must adhere to.

Scope

The Standards apply to all Nursing Assistants employed to support Registered Nurses in HSC Trusts, providing care and services for people who use our services. The Standards will also be referenced in Nursing Assistant job descriptions relevant to the Agenda for Change band and in the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) post outline.

Employers' Responsibilities

Employers of Nursing Assistants are required to have systems and processes in place, including the provision of relevant training and ongoing development, which enables and supports these employees to achieve the Standards.

The key principles for employers are as follows. Employers will:

- ensure that individuals recruited and employed as Nursing Assistants have the necessary attributes for the role;
- provide training on these Standards so that Nursing Assistants understand their role, accountabilities and responsibilities;
- have systems, processes and procedures in place, including KSF post outlines and personal development plans, appraisal and ongoing support/ supervision, to enable Nursing Assistants to meet the requirements of the Standards;
- provide access for Nursing Assistants to education, training and development activities to develop and enhance their knowledge, skills and behaviours relevant to their role;
- support Nursing Assistants with opportunities for career development and ensure that adherence to the Standards is integrated into day-to-day practice within the organisation.

What the Standards will mean for Nursing Assistants

The Standards for Nursing Assistants are informed by the Nursing and Midwifery Council's guidance for Registered Nurses regarding the act of delegation (NMC, 2015¹). It is important to note that a Registered Nurse is accountable for the decision to delegate care and should only delegate care to a Nursing Assistant who has had appropriate training and whom they deem competent to perform a delegated activity. The Nursing Assistant should also understand their role, which includes the nature of the activity, what is expected of them, their limitations and, if circumstances change, when to seek advice. The Nursing Assistant is then accountable for their actions and decisions when undertaking a delegated activity, although the registered practitioner remains accountable for the overall management of the person in their care.

By following these Standards, Nursing Assistants can be assured that they are working to the standard agreed by the DoH, which is essential to protect the people who use our services and others. This document sets clear Standards for Nursing Assistants to:

- help them fulfil the requirements of the role;
- identify the learning and development to be undertaken to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours;
- enable them to do the right thing at all times.

¹ Nursing and Midwifery Council (2015) The Code: Professional Standards for Practice and Behaviour for Nurses and Midwives. London: NMC

What the Standards will mean for people who use our services

The Standards have been developed on the principle of protecting the public. They assist people who use our services to understand the standards expected of Nursing Assistants and their employers.

What the Standards will mean for Registered Nurses and Managers

The Standards will help Registered Nurses, employers and managers understand the standards expected of Nursing Assistants. Line managers will, as part of annual KSF and Personal Development Review/appraisal meetings and ongoing support/supervision, agree areas for the Nursing Assistant's personal development. This will be achieved by reviewing the individual's knowledge, skills and attributes in line with the Standards, the individual's job description and KSF post outline.

The Standards for Nursing Assistants

As a Nursing Assistant you must adhere to these four Standards:

1

Support the delivery of safe, person-centred and compassionate care to people who use our services.

2

Communicate openly and honestly to promote the health and wellbeing of people who use our services.

3

Maintain your knowledge, skills and experience to enable you to do your job properly, in order to improve the quality of care to people who use our services.

4

Respect and protect at all times the right to confidentiality, privacy and dignity for people who use our services.

Standards and Guidance Statements

Each of the four Standards has associated guidance statements which will help you to enhance your knowledge, skills and behaviours to continuously improve your performance and the care you provide for people who use our services. It is essential that you familiarise yourself with these Standards and adhere to them whilst working within your organisation's policies and procedures.



Standard 1:

Support the delivery of safe, person-centred and compassionate care to people who use our services.

1. Care for people who use our services safely and compassionately at all times, to enhance person-centred care.
2. Be accountable by making sure you can always answer for your actions and omissions, in relation to caring for people who use our services.
3. Be honest with yourself and others and only carry out those activities within your remit and delegated to you, for which you have undertaken relevant training and education and have been deemed competent by a Registered Nurse.
4. Do not misuse your privileged position to neglect, harm, abuse or exploit people who use our services.
5. Work collaboratively with colleagues across all disciplines to support person-centred care.

Standard 2:

Communicate openly and honestly to promote the health and wellbeing of people who use our services.

1. Communicate in an open, honest, accurate and timely way with people who use our services and with colleagues to support the delivery of person-centred care.
2. Document and maintain clear and accurate records relevant to the care you have given to a person using our services in line with your organisation's policy.
3. Report any changes in or concerns about the condition of a person who uses our services immediately to the Registered Nurse, who is responsible for the overall management of the person's care.
4. Always take complaints or concerns seriously and raise issues that you are concerned about with your line manager, in line with your organisation's policies.
5. When communicating with people who use our services and with colleagues, recognise the limitations of your role, knowledge and competence.

Standard 3:

Maintain your knowledge, skills and experience to enable you to do your job properly, in order to improve the quality of care to people who use our services.

1. Participate in training and personal development required by your employer and take responsibility for the achievement of the competence essential for your role, in line with KSF and organisational requirements.
2. In agreement with your line manager, ensure you comply with all statutory and mandatory training required for your role.
3. Maintain an up to date record of your own training and development.
4. Contribute to the learning and development of others where appropriate.

Standard 4:

Respect and protect at all times the right to confidentiality, privacy and dignity for people who use our services.

1. Do not discuss or share personal information about people and their treatment inappropriately or with anyone other than relevant colleagues in the team.
2. Uphold and promote the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion for people who use our services and your colleagues, as everyone is entitled to be treated fairly and without bias.
3. Establish and maintain clear and appropriate boundaries in your relationships with people who use our services and with colleagues at all times. Always behave in a professional manner.
4. Refuse to accept any offers of loans, gifts, benefits or hospitality from anyone in your care, or anyone close to them, which may be seen to compromise your position.
5. Do not use social media to share information about the environment you work in or the people for whom you care.



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