British Thoracic Society

A professional development framework for respiratory nursing

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Introduction

Respiratory Nurses are an important component of the multi-disciplinary team for a wide variety of respiratory conditions, providing holistic care for patients in a variety of settings. A recent workforce survey has revealed the broad remit of respiratory nurses, but also highlights a potential workforce crisis with nearly 50% of the respondents intending to retire by 2026. (1)

Currently there is not a recognised career pathway to direct the development of current and aspiring adult respiratory nurses. Therefore, the British Thoracic Society (BTS) Nurse Workforce Group developed an adult respiratory nurse professional development framework, which we hope will support the necessary training and development needs of the respiratory nurse workforce of the future.

The document has been developed deliberately to address generic respiratory nurse competencies for adult nursing, and reflects the four pillars of practice of a Nurse Specialist (2) and Multi-Professional Framework for Advanced Clinical Practice(3)

- Clinical expertise
- Leadership
- Research
- Education and training

We would also recommend that nurses are aware of the Fit to Care document published by the Primary Care Respiratory Society (4).

The competency framework provides a potential career pathway, for adult nurses, from a band 5 nurse to nurse consultant. Examples of job descriptions for each of the bands are available on the BTS website.

Importantly, the document aligns with the core competencies outlined in Agenda for Change job matching profiles (5). This is to ensure that the expertise and experience of respiratory nurses, is recognised, acknowledged and reflected in job descriptions and banding of positions. We hope the role that respiratory nurses play in treating and managing co-morbidities is reflected in the document.

We envisage and hope that the professional development framework will be used by nurses to assess their competencies, highlight and support their training needs, and by managers to ensure the respiratory nurse workforce has appropriate training, skills and experience to provide high quality respiratory nursing care.

Method of production

A Respiratory Nurse Workforce Group was convened in March 2019 and met in July 2019. Members of the group submitted Declaration of Interest forms in line with the BTS policy, and copies of forms are available on request from BTS Head Office.

The draft document was considered in detail by the BTS Workforce and Service Development Committee (BTS WSDC) initially in October 2019. The document was made available on the BTS website for public consultation for the period from 13 November to 18 December 2019. Following further revision, the document was approved by the BTS WSDC in April 2020.

How to use this document

This document provides a potential career pathway for Respiratory nurses and provides a framework to establish levels of knowledge and skills in Respiratory nursing practice, professional development and accountability.

The document is a generic tool which can be adapted to reflect the local context of specific roles within specialties and to track the learning and development impact on Respiratory Nurses' performance. It provides a link between personal and organisational goals enabling nurses to map their development against higher level practice standards and maintain evidence of fitness to practice for registration. It is important to note that while this document can aid personal development, an individual's competencies, and reassessment of these competencies, should be reviewed as part of a standard annual appraisal process.

The document aims to reflect the continuum of development within specialist roles, enhance standards and aid recruitment and retention. It enables the role to integrate into national and local initiatives, providing a structure to ensure smooth succession planning.

The focus of the document is on the post, not the person, reflecting the Agenda for Change job matching profiles.

The professional development framework can be used:

- To identify the knowledge and skills required for individuals applying for new posts.
- As an appraisal tool to support standards of Respiratory nursing care.
- To provide a professional assessment guide for Respiratory nursing practice.
- To support revalidation and personal development

The statements in table 1 include the Agenda for Change band, qualifications required, core clinical skills, education, training and knowledge, leadership and management and research. The core competencies from each Agenda for Change band are incremental e.g. the requirements for band 5 will be expected for all subsequent Agenda for Change band and so on. Therefore, requirements outlined in this framework are cumulative and therefore carry forward to the next band.

Examples of job descriptions band 5-8 are available on the BTS website.

As this is a new document, it will be reviewed by members of the BTS Nurse Specialist Advisory Group, with input from the BTS WSDC, 12-18 months after publication.

Supporting evidence to demonstrate evidence of achievement

Evidence to support career progression may vary but could include the following:

- Portfolio, reflective diary, peer accreditation/review
- Directly observed practise
- Performances review
- Certificates: Academic achievements
                          Attendance (study days, conferences)
- Audit / Quality Improvement /research completed
- Record of publication, posters, presentations
- Production of protocols, business plans, policies, practise innovation and needs analysis
- Participation on committees and steering groups
- Teaching including: Teaching programmes
                          Mentorship programmes
                          Organising meetings
                          Study days
                          Conferences

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Declarations of interest:

Declarations of interest were completed in line with BTS Policy and are available on request from BTS Head Office.

References:

1. Yorke J, Prigmore S, Hodson M, et al 2017. Evaluation of the current landscape of respiratory nurse specialists in the UK: planning for the future needs of patients. BMJ Open Resp Res 2017;4:e000210. doi:10.1136/

2. RCN (2014) Specialist Nurses make a difference. https://www.rcn.org.uk/about-us/policy-briefings/pol-1409

3. Health Education England (2017) Multi-professional Framework for advanced clinical practice. https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/advanced-clinical-practice/multi-professional-framework

4. Primary Care Respiratory Society (2017) Fit to Care

https://www.pcrs-uk.org/resource/fit-care

5. NHS Employers (2019) NHS Job Evaluation Handbook (nhsemployees.org) https://www.nhsemployers.org/news/2019/03/new-job-evaluation-handbook

Useful documents / links:

1. Royal College of Nursing Tuberculosis Nurse Competency Framework for TB Prevention, Care and Control, December 2017

https://www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/public-health/tuberculosis

2. National consensus standards for the nursing management of cystic fibrosis, May 2001:

https://www.cysticfibrosis.org.uk/the-work-we-do/resources-for-cf-professionals/consensus-documents

3. Interim NHS People Plan 2019. https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/publication/interim-nhs-people-plan/

Table 1: Competency Statements

Band	Qualifications	Core Clinical Skills	Knowledge/ Training & Experience	Leadership and management	Research
Band 5 Staff Nurse	Registered nurse Nursing degree (BSc)/ Diploma	Accurately record clinical data and understand its significance e.g. heart rate and rhythm, respiratory rate, pulse oximetry, peak flow rate, blood pressure, carbon mon-oxide level. Understanding of the benefits of non-pharmacological interventions for respiratory illnesses/ conditions (such as smoking cessation, weight management, physical activity and exercise). Understanding of motivational skills and empathic communication Able to assess smoking status, provide very brief advice for smok-ing cessation and refer to appropri-ate stop smoking service. Able to assess and train inhaler technique to patients, car-ers and other Health Care Profes-sionals. Able to undertake a holistic nursing respiratory assessment and impact on social and psychological well-being. Awareness, knowledge and imple-mentation of safeguarding proce-dures in relation to children, vulner-able patients and carers.	Understanding of respiratory anatomy and function. Understanding of more common respiratory pathophysiology and respiratory conditions. Understanding of relevant investigations/ tests e.g. spirometry. Understanding of holistic care and management of long-term conditions and their impact on physical and mental well-being. Willingness to work towards relevant respiratory modules/In-house training. Knowledge of providing very brief advice on smoking cessation. Knowledge of benefits of pulmonary rehabilitation. Awareness and implementation of evidence-based guidelines. Knowledge of self-management – access to information and resources, knowledge of local support groups and local social prescrib-ing routes (e.g. singing/exercise). Relevant skills to enable teaching, coaching skills, clinical supervision and mentoring of colleagues. Adaptable teaching skills in relation to pa-tients, carers and colleagues.	Understands own role within the wider multi-disciplinary team. Can articulate own development needs. Participates in professional networking. Participates in clinical supervision.	Awareness of research, audit and quality improvement. Participates in Quality Improvement activities/ audits.

Band	Qualifications	Core Clinical Skills	Knowledge/ Training & Experience	Leadership and management	Research
Band 6 Respiratory Nurse/ Specialist **Plus all elements from Band 5.**	Nursing degree (BSc). Recognised relevant post graduate education level 6 or above.	Specialist clinical assessment skills for example chest auscultation, physical assessment, spirometry, blood gases (dependent on requirements of the team/role). Good communications skills. Implementation of evidence-based guidelines. Autonomous working according to level of competence. Understanding/use of health related quality of life (HRQL) questionnaires, patient reported outcome measures (PROMS) and patient reported experience measures (PREMS).	Evidence of training including pathophysiology, pharmacological treatments, inhaler training, spirometry. Specialist knowledge of respiratory disease including disease specific management pathways. Prescribing qualification (if applicable and desirable for the role). Able to interpret relevant investigations/test e.g. spirometry. Adaptable teaching skills in relation to patients/carers/ colleagues. Develops written and verbal presentation skills.	Able to advocate confidently on behalf of a patient/care givers and colleagues. Develops leadership skills. Participates in and provides Clinical Supervision. Participates in networking opportunities.	Participates in audit and quality improvement initiatives. Participates in research.

Band	Qualifications	Core Clinical Skills	Knowledge/ Training & Experience	Leadership and management	Research
Band 7 Respiratory Nurse Specialist **Plus all elements from band 5 & 6.**	Nursing degree (BSc) Commitment to work towards level 7 modules. Prescribing qualification (if applicable and desirable for the role).	Highly developed clinical skills in specialist field and within the field of nursing. Diagnostic skills relevant to the specialty. Advanced communication skills. Confident to work in a rapidly changing environment +/- complex needs management. Autonomous working. Supervising junior members of the team.	Specialist knowledge of disease specific guidelines. Advanced written and verbal presentation skills.	Leadership skills. Initiates and leads evidence-based strategies. Management experience. Promotes service development, improvements and expansion. Able to articulate the value of nursing.	Undertakes audit, research and quality improvement initiatives and activities.

Band	Qualifications	Core Clinical Skills	Knowledge/ Training & Experience	Leadership and management	Research
Band 8 **Respiratory Nurse Specialist/ Lead nurse** **Plus all elements from band 5 - 7.**	Master's degree (MSc or MA)	Advanced/expert clinical skills in specialist field and within the field of nursing.	Has highly specialist knowledge/ experience in specialist field and within the field of nursing. Advanced understanding of holistic care and management of long-term conditions and their impact on physical and mental well-being.	Strategic leadership roles – Regionally. Influence regional Committees. National working. Advanced presentation and interpersonal skills. Leads service improvement/ redesign/expansion of service. Complex problem solving and conflict management skills.	Undertakes research, involvement in audit and QI activities.

Band	Qualifications	Core Clinical Skills	Knowledge/ Training & Experience	Leadership and management	Research
Band 8 **Respiratory Nurse Consultant** Undertakes the 4 pillars of the national nurse consultant specification (practice, research, education, and leadership) **Plus all elements from band 5-7.**	Master's degree (MSc or MA). Working towards a PhD/ Doctoral Degree.	Advanced/expert clinical skills in specialist field and within the field of nursing.	Has expert knowledge in specialist field and within the field of nursing. Advanced understanding of holistic care and management of long-term conditions and their impact on physical and mental well-being.	Strategic leadership roles-regionally/ national influence/ national committees/ international working. Evidence of publications. Contributes to nursing knowledge and practice at a national level.	Regularly undertakes and leads audit/quality improvement activities. Represents and leads nursing research projects relevant to the profession. Acts as Principal Investigator for research studies. Leads on research grant applications. Supervision of Students undertaking post basic courses e.g. MSc /MPhil.