Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS

CORE COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

for Nurses and Midwives

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Foreword:

Safeguarding adults is everybody's business. All nurses who work with vulnerable adults have the responsibility to safeguard their wellbeing and safety in different ways. Safeguarding forms part of core business by ensuring health and patient safety, promoting independence and wellbeing and protecting people from harm. However, it also refers to a very specific area of work- the reactive inter-agency response to protect vulnerable adults who are at risk of significant harm.

I am delighted to endorse my support of this framework which sets out the knowledge, skills and attitudes that nursing staff across the public and private sectors will require in order to interact and respond effectively to the needs of people presenting with safeguarding needs. Training of nurses is needed to ensure those working with vulnerable adults have the right knowledge and skills to do their job well, to be able to protect, identify and take the appropriate action to sure people in their care are kept safe from harm.

It is the culmination of considerable efforts by staff working within adult protection services, academics and regulators and I am delighted that this document complements the work already undertaken through the NI Adult Safeguarding Partnership (NIASP) in the development of a multi-disciplinary training strategy.

It will allow individual nursing staff and their managers to assess their training needs and those of their staff team and will enable educationalists to design and deliver targeted training programmes.

Ultimately this framework will enhance the quality of life, improve care and treatment for vulnerable adults and higher standards of service will be delivered by a competent and professional nursing workforce.

Professor Charlotte McArdle
DOH Chief Nursing Officer

SECTION 1

1.1   Introduction

Safeguarding in its simplest terms is identifying harm or the risk of harm and acting in such a way as to prevent or reduce that risk. Safety, along with respect, dignity and choice, is a basic human right and something most of us take for granted. At times we will all be vulnerable, whether through accident or injury, physical or mental illness, disability or the ageing process. Our ability to remain in control of our own lives may be challenged and our own level of dependence on others to meet these needs will vary. This makes the process of adult safeguarding complex and challenging.

The Policy (DHSSPSNI & DoJNI, 2015) Adult Safeguarding; Prevention and Protection in Partnership highlights the importance of prevention in relation to the safeguarding continuum. It would be the intention of this framework, that by bringing safeguarding competency to the fore, potential abuse may be identified in a timely manner, and preventative steps taken, to prevent the protection threshold being reached; whilst equipping registrants with the essential skills to effectively deal with this should it occur.

While adult safeguarding is everybody's business and should be a core aspect of all professional practice, the Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Partnership (NIASP) recognises that no single person or professional group can possibly address these complex situations in isolation. NIASP continues to promote the importance of positive partnership working across professional boundaries, with service users, patients and their families/carers to achieve the best possible outcomes for the victims/potential victims of adult abuse, neglect or exploitation. It is therefore the responsibility of all staff within health and social care, irrespective of background, department or sector to be aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to adult safeguarding and, as stated by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC, 2015), it should be part of everyday practice for all nurses and midwives.

The aim of this competency framework is to ensure staff gain and maintain the correct level of skills and knowledge in relation to adult safeguarding practice. It is intended that this will provide nurses and midwives with the confidence and skills to recognise and effectively

manage those situations which may arise where there is suspicion of abuse, neglect or harm to an individual. This framework clearly identifies the skills, knowledge and attributes each registered nurse and midwife should have in relation to their own role. It emphasises an understanding of the processes within each Trust area, the need to know who the safeguarding team are and how to access them. The competency framework aims to enable nurses and midwives to identify their learning and development needs in relation to Adult Safeguarding ensuring the provision of safe, effective person centred services.   It is an important addition to a range of tools for best practice which include *The Code* (NMC, 2015), *Enabling Professionalism* (NMC, 2017), *Adult Safeguarding; Prevention and Protection in Partnership* (DHSSPSNI & DoJNI, 2015).

1.2   Development of the Competency Framework

This Competency framework has been developed through;

- A review of the literature and existing competency frameworks to ensure identification and prioritisation of the key areas to be included in the competency framework
- Consideration of available training on adult safeguarding.
- Consultation with Nurses and midwives working throughout Northern Ireland in both the independent and statutory sectors.
- Advice from the Expert Reference group and Steering group members (Appendix 2)

1.3   What is a competency framework?

A competency framework defines the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed in order to perform effectively in a given job, role or situation. The main goal of a competency framework is to clearly identify and communicate the knowledge, skills and attitudes an employee needs to thrive in a job; it can increase clarity around performance expectations. This competency framework has been designed to help you prepare for:

- Supervision meetings
- KSF development review or annual appraisal meetings
- Job interviews
- Revalidation

1.4   Who is this competency framework for?

- This competency framework is aimed at all registered nurses and midwives regardless of practice area or speciality. The framework has been developed taking cognisance of the NIASP Training and Development Framework which succinctly outlines the levels of training for everyone who is involved in the lives of adults at risk in Northern Ireland. The table below will assist you to identify which level of competence you require for your role. Each level builds on the competencies identified in the preceding level.
- Those staff not registered with the NMC should discuss their training needs with their line manager and refer to the NIASP Training and Development Framework for guidance as to the level of training they require to fulfil their role.

1.5   Using the Competence Assessment Tool

The *Assessment Tool* has been devised to be used alongside a range of general competency frameworks (that focus on core skills and competencies for all qualified nurses and midwives). The Competence Assessment Tool can help you think about the knowledge and skills required for your current role. You may use the Tool to prepare for supervision meetings or to gather evidence that you can bring to your annual development review and/or appraisal meetings.

Your assessment results and any related reflections can be entered into your professional portfolio, online or in hard copy. This means you can demonstrate your learning and development and meet Revalidation requirements.

To assess your personal competence identify which competency level is relevant to your current role. You should use the following rating scale to assess your learning and development needs against each of the attribute statements within your level:

- **LD** - You need a **lot of development**.
- **SD** - You need **some development**.
- **WD** - You feel you are **well developed**.

It generally takes about 15 minutes to assess yourself against the competence statements. Place a ✓ to rate the statement which is applicable to your individual learning and

development. When you have finished, review the number of LDs,

SDs, and WDs. You can then plan, with your line manager, the learning and development activities which are relevant to your role.

Practice Tips

Before starting your assessment, you may find it helpful to discuss the statements with one of your peers. You can also test your self-assessment with your line manager. Be honest with yourself when thinking about your role and your learning and development needs and rate them realistically.

Adult Safeguarding Competency Framework

Level 1 – General Awareness (See NIASP Training and Development Framework)
Target Audience   All staff and volunteers in the organisation
Level 2 – Awareness Raising, Recognising & Responding
Target Audience   All Nurses & Midwives who have direct contact with adults at risk of harm or in need of protection
Level 3 – Managers Training
Target Audience   All front line Managers / nominated Managers/and Safeguarding Champions
Level 4 – Investigating Officer and Specialist Nurse[1]
Target Audience   4a – All Trust Nurses & Midwives who are nominated for the Investigating Officer role   4b – All Adult Safeguarding Nurse Specialists who are nominated for Investigating Officer role and should be read in conjunction with the *'Career Framework for Specialist Nursing Roles'(2018* pending publication*).*

The core specific competency areas have also been mapped to the relevant themes of the NMC's Code – Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses and midwives (2015)[2] and specific dimensions of the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF), (Department of Health, 2004)[3]

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[1] Only those Nurses with a Specialist Practice Qualification should use the title Specialist (*Career Framework for Specialist Practice Nursing roles* (DoH 2018 pending publication)

[2] NMC (2015) *The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses and midwives*. London: NMC

[3] Department of Health (2004) *NHS/HPSS Knowledge and Skills Framework.* London: DH.

SECTION 2

LEVEL 2	LD	SD	WD
Knowledge • Recognise those contributory factors which increase an individual's vulnerability, risk of harm or need of protection. • Understand the impact of social media in relation to adult safeguarding. • Have an understanding of adult safeguarding legislation including Human Rights Legislation. • Understand the importance of, and the local process for, escalating adult safeguarding concerns. • Understand local and regional Adult Safeguarding Policies and Procedures and Regional Guidance. • Understand the interface between adult and child safeguarding. **Skills** • Use nursing assessment skills to recognise an adult who is potentially at risk of harm or in need of protection. • Take immediate action within your level of expertise, to safeguard an individual whilst maintaining personal safety and the safety of others. • Report and record accurately details of issues of concern according to local and regional policies/procedures. • Record factual, succinct, person centred and contemporaneous records being mindful of the need for confidentiality and issues regarding data protection when sharing information. • Preserve potential evidence as part of any possible Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust or Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) investigation, seeking advice and guidance in relation to what needs to be preserved.			

LEVEL 2	LD	SD	WD
- Communicate clearly with the multi professional team in a timely way. - Contribute to the development and implementation of a protection plan, contributing to the evaluation of its effectiveness. - Participate in learning by reflecting on outcomes, applying what has been learnt, and sharing any learning to improve practice and service delivery. - Participate in preventative strategies, to minimise risk before it occurs, and minimise the impact of harm where it is unavoidable. - Support others to report concerns. - Advocate for the rights of individuals, their families and carers within the care environment recognising influences such as power, control and conflict. - Communicate openly with clients and their families. **Attitude** - Be alert to, identify, and act upon Safeguarding concerns. - Accept responsibility to proactively respond to concerns/signs of risk. - Recognise your own role, and respect the role of the multiagency team, to ensure effective adult safeguarding. - Engage in and encourage a continuous learning culture. - Work within an ethos which ensures service users/carers are supported to understand the safeguarding process in a person centred and sensitive manner, being mindful of the effects of abuse and the ensuing safeguarding processes may have on the individual and their carer(s). - Show respect for and foster effective relationships with all stakeholders.			

LEVEL 3	LD	SD	WD
Knowledge • Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the application of policies and procedures including Human Resource (HR) processes. • Demonstrate a clear understanding of the thresholds and pathways for investigating/responding to a safeguarding alert and/or referral. • Demonstrate a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all agencies involved in adult safeguarding. • Have knowledge of support services for carers and staff and be able to signpost to these for support. • Have a knowledge of child safeguarding Policy and Procedures and the interface between adult and child safeguarding. • Have a knowledge of conflict resolution and mediation strategies. **Skills** • Consider the capacity to consent of the person at risk of harm / in need of protection throughout the investigation process and using a person centred approach effectively communicate with the person and relevant stakeholders including carers. • Compile and analyse appropriate records providing clear rationale for decisions taken. • Adhere to and support robust record keeping practices. • Understand the process of referral to a Designated Adult Protection Officer (DAPO). • Contribute to multi professional and interagency communication and collaboration related to adult safeguarding concerns in a timely way. • Adhere to and evaluate agreed protection plans.			

LEVEL 3	LD	SD	WD
• Support the workforce to have the required knowledge and skills to contribute fully to adult safeguarding by ensuring that effective training is in place. • Facilitate an effective learning environment to support the dissemination of learning and the professional development of staff. • Challenge circumstances that may lead to poor practice in adult safeguarding. • Manage conflicts, disputes and difficult situations. • Provide support and supervision to staff involved in adult safeguarding cases. **Attitudes/Behaviours** • Promote a person centred approach throughout safeguarding practice. • Promote open and transparent working cultures that encourage good practice. • Be aware of own limitations and knowledge in relation to the remit of adult safeguarding. • Display professional accountability to ensure safe and effective practice that meets the needs of patients/clients, their families and carers.			

LEVEL 4A	LD	SD	WD
Knowledge • Know how to apply the principles of the safeguarding policy and procedures to the investigative process. • Know the roles and responsibility of partner agencies involved in investigations. • Understand data protection requirements during the recording, transfer and filing of all data. • Knowledge of legislation, processes, standards and organisational procedures such as issues around Human Rights, Deprivation of Liberty & Capacity and Consent. **Skills** • Establish a collaborative working relationship with the DAPO to set out clear guidelines in relation to the investigation process. • Recognise the capacity to consent of the person at risk of harm / in need of protection throughout the investigation process, and if required, seek a formal assessment of capacity in relation to the matter. • Work in collaboration with the DAPO to ensure that recommendations outlined in the investigation reports are implemented by the relevant stakeholders. • Maintain appropriate records in line with Adult Safeguarding Policies, including protection planning and risk assessment. • Contribute to the protection plan and ensure it is robust and balances human rights, deprivation of liberty and wider safeguarding considerations. • Monitor implementation of the protection plan. • Communicate the content of any protection plan to key stakeholders. • Contribute to the improvement of the service by influencing			

LEVEL 4A	LD	SD	WD
change through the use of Evidence Based Practice. • Deliver expert nursing advice/education and training concerning adult safeguarding to multiagency teams/stakeholders, and foster a culture of shared learning within the team. • Contribute to any SAI or case review, as requested, where adult safeguarding is an issue. **Attitudes and behaviours** • Investigate allegations of abuse/neglect in a non-judgemental, sensitive and respectful manner, utilising expert nursing knowledge and experience, within the guidance of the associated policy and procedures. • Promote effective working relationships, and communication strategies, with multiagency partners and stakeholders. • Challenge barriers to effective Adult safeguarding.			

LEVEL 4B - should be read in conjunction with the *Career Framework for Specialist Nursing Roles' (2017).*	LD	SD	WD
Knowledge			
• Comprehensive knowledge of professional standards such as Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC), Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).			
• Advanced knowledge of organisational/regional strategic objectives for Adult safeguarding services.			
Skills			
• Demonstrate strategic and professional nursing leadership in relation to adult safeguarding.			
• Lead innovation and change to improve safeguarding across all adult services.			
• Provide expert nursing advice, support and consultancy to other nurses and health and social care professionals within the Trust and external organisations.			
• Contribute to the development of effective inter disciplinary and inter agency relationships to improve outcomes for adults at risk of harm and in need of protection.			
• Identify complex and multifaceted issues that require the expertise of an adult safeguarding specialist nurse.			
• Participate in the implementation of the work plan developed by the Local Adult Safeguarding Partnership (LASP).			
• Demonstrate the ability to challenge internal and external agencies to ensure wider safeguarding risks are identified and acted on appropriately.			
• Contribute to / engage in adult safeguarding research activities and evaluate the effectiveness of evidence based practice.			
• Analyse findings from national reports, local reports and case reviews considering the implications for service delivery/learning.			

LEVEL 4B - should be read in conjunction with the *'Career Framework for Specialist Nursing Roles' (2017).*	LD	SD	WD
• Use lessons learnt from audits, feedback and current research to identify/ highlight areas for service improvement and promote creative solutions with a focus on a person centred approach. • Participate in the development of local and regional policies and strategic guidance. **Attitudes and behaviours** • Act as an expert role model for nursing in the field of adult safeguarding. • Engage with staff teams, employing an attitude of enthusiasm towards adult safeguarding, motivating others to improve the service and outcomes for individuals.			

APPENDIX 1

The framework is informed by the following documents:

DHSSPSNI, DoJNI (2015) **Adult Safeguarding; Prevention and Protection in Partnership**. Belfast; DHSSPSNI & DoJNI

Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Partnership (2016) **Training Strategy and Framework 2013** (Revised 2016). Belfast; HSCNI. Available from: http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/download/PUBLICATIONS/safeguard-vulnerable-adults/niasp-publications/Adult-Safeguarding-Operational-Procedures.pdf

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

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2017**) Enabling Professionalism in Nursing and Midwifery Practice**. London; NMC

Royal College of Nursing (2015) **Safeguarding Adults – everyone's responsibility**. RCN guidance for nursing staff. London; RCN

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (2018) **Guidance for Regulated Service Providers**. Belfast; RQIA Available from https://www.rqia.org.uk/guidance/guidance-for-service-providers/guidance-for-regulated-service-providers/ (accessed 07/06/18)

APPENDIX 2

Membership of the Steering Group

Name	Designation	Organisation
Geraldine Brown	Assistant Director of Nursing for Secondary Care (Chair)	WHSCT
Eleanor Ross	Assistant Director of Nursing	PHA
Joel McFetridge	Safeguarding Nurse	BHSCT
Raymond Mc Cafferty Norma McIntyre	Safeguarding Nurse	NHSCT
Louise Magee	Safeguarding Nurse	SEHSCT
Louise Hall	Mental Health Nursing	SHSCT
Megan Miller	Safeguarding Nurse	WHSCT
Sibymol Joseph	Safeguarding Nurse	SHSCT
Joyce McKee	Regional Adult Safeguarding Officer	NIASP
Janet Montgomery	Director	IHCP
Lorraine Thompson	Regional Manager	FSHC
Melanie McClements	Assistant Director of Older Peoples Services	SHSCT
Joanne Blair	Lecturer	QUB
Seana Duggan	Lecturer	UU
Eilish Boyle	Senior manager	CEC
Martina Doolan	Team Leader NHSCT	RCM
Rosaline Kelly	Senior Professional Development Officer	RCN
Jane Greene	Consultant Nurse	SHSCT
Valerie McConnell	Social Care Commissioning Lead MH & LD	HSCB
Karen Murray	Senior Professional Officer (Project lead)	NIPEC

Expert Reference Group

Name	Designation	Organisation
Eleanor Ross	Assistant Director of Nursing	PHA
Karen Murray	Senior Professional Officer (Project lead)	NIPEC
Joel McFetridge	Safeguarding Nurse	BHSCT
Raymond Mc Cafferty Norma McIntyre	Safeguarding Nurse	NHSCT
Louise Magee	Safeguarding Nurse	SEHSCT
Megan Miller	Safeguarding Nurse	WHSCT
Sibymol Joseph	Safeguarding Nurse	SHSCT
Joanne Blair	Lecturer	QUB
Seana Duggan	Lecturer	UU
Eilish Boyle	Senior Manager	CEC
Jane Greene	Consultant Nurse	SHSCT
Ann Marie Fox Anne Marie Lyons	Manager Adult Safeguarding	BHSCT
Jenny Fitzsimmons	Safeguarding Lead	SEHSCT