

Speciality Framework Dietetic Support Workforce





Owner/co-owner

Scottish Government, NHS Education for Scotland (NES), Allied Health Professions (AHP) Commission working group for speciality frameworks and subgroup for dietetics.

Acknowledgements

AHP Commission working group for speciality frameworks and subgroup for dietetics.

Date of publication

April 2026

Date for review

April 2028

Speciality Framework

Dietetic Support Workforce

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Introduction

Support workers are a vital part of Dietetic multidisciplinary teams but currently lack consistent roles and clear education pathways across Scotland. This framework, commissioned by the Scottish Government and developed by NES with stakeholders, establishes a national approach to define the required knowledge and skills.

Aim and outcomes

The framework outlines the knowledge and skills needed to deliver high-quality care across four pillars of practice at career levels 3 and 4. It supports practitioners, managers, and educators by clarifying expectations, enabling career development, and strengthening recruitment and succession planning. For further information please refer to the [Career Framework for Health](#) model and the [NMAHP Development Framework](#).

Outcomes and Impact of the Framework

The framework defines the knowledge and skills required for Dietetic services, supporting individuals, organisations, and educators to develop practice and ensure services meet local needs. It enables clear career pathways by helping practitioners and managers benchmark skills and plan progression, supporting both horizontal and vertical development. It also supports recruitment and succession planning by guiding organisations to identify workforce needs and attract individuals committed to developing within the service.

Background

Commissioned in 2021, this work focuses on Allied Health Profession support workers. Developed collaboratively with national stakeholders, it reflects current and emerging service models and has been nationally reviewed and approved. For the purposes of this speciality framework, it was decided by the working group to concentrate on levels 3 and 4 as there are less level 2 support workers within specialities.

Structure of framework

The framework describes the knowledge, skills, and behaviours required across levels 3 and 4 within four pillars of practice. It also includes role descriptors, education guidance, supervision and delegation principles, and advice on recording learning.

Pillars of practice

The framework is based on the four pillars of practice for NMAHPs and support workers (figure 1).

- Clinical Practice (safe, effective, person-centred care)
- Facilitating Learning (supporting workplace learning)
- Leadership (leading and managing responsibilities)
- Service Improvement (using evidence to improve care)



Further explanation of the pillars of practice is available within the [NMAHP Development framework](#).

Levels of practice

These levels reflect increasing responsibility and complexity and are separate from pay banding structures.

The framework recognises how complex healthcare practitioner's roles have become and helps to explain the difference in expectations and learning at different levels. These levels are described in the [Career Framework for Health](#) which reflects role development and progression. These levels are not the same bands in Agenda for Change, which are related to remuneration. It also reflects the education and career development pathways model

set out in the [Transforming Roles](#) programme. The framework focuses on Levels 3 and 4 of the Career Framework for Health.

- **Level 3 Senior Healthcare Support Worker**
- **Level 4 Assistant Practitioner**

Further explanation of the levels of practice is available within the [NMAHP Development framework](#).

Levels of practice and pay bands

It is important to understand that the levels of practice outlined in the framework differ fundamentally from pay banding. The levels represent career progression and are not tied to the Agenda for Change (AfC) pay bands, which are determined by employers and relate to remuneration.

Related frameworks

The structure of this framework builds upon the [NMAHP Development Framework](#) to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and behaviours required by practitioners working in the service area.

NHS Scotland's Values

Throughout this framework, the core values shared across Scotland's Health Service will be embedded. The core values include:

- care and compassion
- dignity and respect
- openness, honesty, and responsibility
- quality and teamwork

(Scottish Government, 2013)

Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) Values

The SSSC core values are to:

- listen
- learn
- do the right thing

(SSSC, 2023)

Equality and health inequalities statement

The framework supports equality, reduces health inequalities, and meets Public Sector Equality Duty requirements.

There is a firm commitment to improving population health, reducing health inequalities, and working nationally and locally with partners to make a positive and lasting impact to improving the wellbeing of the people of Scotland.

Using the framework

The framework is designed to enhance current healthcare services by serving as a dynamic document that identifies areas for development among the workforce. It aims to ensure that the workforce possesses the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver high-quality care tailored to the needs of their service/local populations. As healthcare demands evolve, the framework can help assess current and future requirements.

It is intended for use by Nurses, Midwives, Allied Health Professionals (NMAHPs), Support Workers, managers/organisations and educators.

Scope of practice

Health and social care practitioners have a responsibility to keep knowledge and skills up to date, take part in appropriate and regular learning and professional development activities that aim to maintain and develop their competence and improve their performance.

Health and social care practitioners who delegate care to others must ensure the person's knowledge, skills and competence are appropriate and safe. The resource [Making delegation safe and effective : a learning resource for nurses, midwives, allied health professionals and health care support workers](#) can be accessed on Turas Learn. The NMC and HCPC also provide guidance relating to delegation.

Recording learning and development

All healthcare practitioners are expected to maintain a professional portfolio that documents their personal and professional development. The method of recording this

evidence whether electronically or on paper is a personal choice. However, it is recommended to use the Turas Professional Portfolio, which is accessible to all Nurses, Midwives, Allied Health Professionals, and support workers in Scotland, including those in the NHS, social care, and voluntary and independent sectors.

Log in/register with Turas and add the professional portfolio application:

<https://turasdashboard.nes.nhs.scot/>

HealthCare Support Workers - [Professional Portfolio \(Recognition of Prior Learning\) for HCSWs](#)

Support and supervision

All healthcare practitioners should have regular supervision appropriate to their role as described in the framework KSBs. The aim of supervision is to facilitate guided reflection and learning, to support practice development and enhance work satisfaction. Employers are responsible for providing appropriate access to supervision.

Role, education, knowledge, skills and behaviours

The framework outlines roles, responsibilities, qualifications, and knowledge and skills for Levels 3 and 4 across the four pillars of practice, with reference to core KSBs in the NMAHP Development Framework. It is flexible, recognising that learning needs and educational requirements will evolve with service demands and can be applied across both health and social care settings. For core KSBs for each pillar of practice, please refer to the [NMAHP Development Framework](#).

This framework recognises that local policies, governance arrangements, and role descriptions may vary across NHS Boards. As a result, specific duties and responsibilities may differ to reflect local service needs and agreed scope of practice. Practitioners are therefore expected to apply this framework flexibly, implementing its principles and knowledge, skills and behaviours where appropriate and in line with local policies and governance, delegated authority, and professional guidance.

Level 3 Senior Healthcare Support Worker

Role and Responsibility

- Deliver delegated care, treatment or intervention with compassion, civility and kindness, under the direction and supervision (direct and indirect) of a healthcare practitioner or assistant practitioner
- Contribute to own team and the multidisciplinary / multi-agency team in the delivery of high-quality care
- Work within local policies and guidelines

Title: Senior Healthcare Support Worker

The level outline is informed by the Development and Education Framework for Levels 2 – 4 NMAHP Healthcare Support Workers

Qualifications and experience expected for practitioners at this level of career framework

- Can evidence previous knowledge and relevant experience using Recognition of Prior Learning
- Normally at or working towards a SCQF Level 7 qualification in a health or social care related subject
- Numeracy and literacy qualifications are required at this level of practice
- IT / computer literacy are required at this level of practice

Level 3 - Clinical Practice Pillar – (see 1-16 core KSBs [Key Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours \(KSBs\) Statements | NMAHP Development Framework](#))

Reference code	Speciality key knowledge, skills, and behaviours
3C17	Develop an understanding of the nutritional value of different foods, fluids and oral nutritional supplements.
3C18	Develop an understanding of the impact of different food, fluids and oral nutritional supplements on health conditions.
3C19	Develop Standard Operating Procedures, manuals and induction packs for staff, to ensure standardisation and compliance.
3C20	Record and collates background information and paperwork to assist dietitians in preparing for reviews.
3C21	Accept and carry out delegated tasks from dietitian.
3C22	Implement Waiting Well Initiatives and prehabilitation to commence early intervention and prevention e.g. guidance on symptom management.
3C23	Assist with information gathering (face to face/phone calls and digital platforms) to gain a detailed history and report back to dietitian to formulate a treatment plan.
3C24	Order oral nutritional supplement samples.
3C25	Process oral nutritional supplement prescriptions after approval by a dietitian.
3C26	Support the organisation and preparation of nutritional enteral tube feeding and home kits.
3C27	Monitor and carry out the dietitian’s agreed treatment plan and report back on progress.
3C28	Communicate collaboratively and supportively with the multidisciplinary team, by sharing task-focused updates and concerns under the guidance of the supervising dietitian, who retains responsibility for direct liaison and clinical decision-making.
3C29	Draft and support the completion of onward referrals to other services, after discussion with and approval from the supervising dietitian.
3C30	Maintain accurate and timely notes and records.
3C31	Demonstrate the ability to support digital service delivery, including remote sessions.

Level 3 - Facilitating Learning Pillar – (see 1-4 core KSBs [Key Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours \(KSBs\) Statements](#) | [NMAHP Development Framework](#))

Reference code	Speciality key knowledge, skills, and behaviours
3F5	Work in accordance with the AHP Practice Education Development Framework e.g. giving and receiving feedback.
3F6	Provide support and shadowing opportunities for HCSWs, NQPs and students, with guidance from a dietitian.
3F7	Understand the value of learning from others in the multi-disciplinary team to gain up to date clinical and speciality knowledge and skills and an understanding of AHP roles within their setting.
3F8	After appropriate training and confirmation of competence, assist with MUST (or equivalent screening) and nutritional support training by sharing practical experience and supporting colleagues to develop the skills and confidence to deliver scoring.
3F9	Deliver education sessions based on plan provided by dietitian or accredited programme body.
3F10	Ability to reflect on and demonstrate own communication, within the team environment and to engage with individuals.
3F11	Participate in supervision to reflect on practice, gain guidance, and develop skills.

Level 3 - Leadership Pillar (see 1-4 core KSBs [Key Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours \(KSBs\) Statements | NMAHP Development Framework](#))

Reference code	Speciality key knowledge, skills, and behaviours
3L5	Assist with discharge processes and additional administration support.
3L6	Manage the stock room and team provisions by maintaining stock levels, ordering supplies, and carrying out calibration and checks on scales and nutritional supplements.
3L7	Demonstrate professional and collaborative behaviour by being a positive role model, showing initiative, and supporting colleagues (including students) through sharing good practice and assisting with induction.
3L8	Take responsibility for aspects of health and safety, including risk assessments and equipment checks, to help ensure safe and effective service delivery.
3L9	Take part in local or national working groups where appropriate.

Level 3 - Service Improvement Pillar – (see 1-4 core KSBs [Key Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours \(KSBs\) Statements | NMAHP Development Framework](#))

Reference code	Speciality key knowledge, skills, and behaviours
3S5	Support with key learning from adverse events e.g. team-based review.
3S6	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 in their setting.
3S7	Support with service evaluation and audit e.g. questionnaire design.

Level 4 Assistant Practitioner

Role and Responsibility

- Has developed clinical skills which are more specialised than senior HCSWs and specific to an area of practice
- Actively involved in supporting others to learn, for example HCSWs, senior HCSWs 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, in support of and supervised (direct or indirect) by healthcare 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 each profession and context of care delivery

Title: Assistant Practitioner

The level outline is informed by the Development and Education Framework for Levels 2 – 4 NMAHP Healthcare Support Workers

Qualifications and experience expected for practitioners at this level of career framework

- Can evidence previous relevant experience using Recognition of Prior Learning
- Normally at or working towards a SCQF Level 8 qualification in a health or social care related subject
- 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
- IT / computer literacy are required at this level of practice

Level 4 - Clinical Practice Pillar – (See 1-15 core KSBS [Key Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours \(KSBS\) Statements | NMAHP Development Framework](#))

Reference code	Speciality key knowledge, skills, and behaviours
4C16	Demonstrate knowledge of the nutritional value of different foods, fluids and oral nutritional supplements. (Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) BAPEN)
4C17	Demonstrate knowledge of the impact of different food, fluids and oral nutritional supplements on health conditions. (Medical conditions food facts - BDA)
4C18	Conduct information gathering (face to face/phone calls and digital platforms) to gain a detailed history.
4C19	Accept and carry out delegated tasks from dietitians in relation to assessments and treatments.
4C20	Assess and implement Waiting Well Initiatives and prehabilitation to commence early intervention and prevention e.g. guidance on self-care and symptom management.
4C21	Listen empathetically to patients and relatives during their consultation and offer support and guidance.
4C22	Estimate nutritional requirements for specific treatment plans guided by the dietitian.
4C23	Undertake review consultations to monitor progress against treatment plans.
4C24	Discuss goal setting and interventions to support programme progress.
4C25	Develop new nutritional resources or bespoke ones if required.
4C26	Utilise nutritional analysis software.
4C27	Lead, facilitate, and triage patients on established programmes.
4C28	Contribute to the assessment, implementation, and monitoring of nutrition support programmes, making recommendations regarding discharge guided by a dietitian.
4C29	Support and coordinates onward referrals and assess and implement referrals guided by a dietitian.
4C30	Gather, record, and contribute to patient-reported and patient experience outcome measures and assess and implement them with guidance from a dietitian.
4C31	Maintain accurate, timely notes and records utilising digital systems within localities.
4C32	Lead the organisation and preparation of nutritional enteral tube feeding and home kits.
4C33	Demonstrate the ability to support digital service delivery, including remote sessions and coaching.

Level 4 - Facilitating Learning Pillar – (See 1-6 core KSBS [Key Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours \(KSBs\) Statements | NMAHP Development Framework](#))

Reference code	Speciality key knowledge, skills, and behaviours
4F7	Demonstrate enhanced communication skills e.g. by presenting and providing case feedback to multi-disciplinary team meetings.
4F8	Demonstrate reflective practice by critically evaluating own communication within the team environment and when engaging with individuals, using this insight to improve effectiveness and collaboration.
4F9	Actively utilise supervision to inform, reflect on, and develop practice.
4F10	Understand the value of learning from others in the multi-disciplinary team to gain up to date clinical and speciality knowledge and skills and an understanding of AHP roles within the work-based setting.
4F11	Work in accordance with the AHP Practice Education Development Framework e.g. giving and receiving feedback.
4F12	Provide support, supervision and preceptorship to HCSW, Newly Qualified Practitioners (NQPs) and students.
4F13	Lead and facilitate group work and classes to provide information. Be able to reflect and evaluate how the activity went.
4F14	Lead and facilitate training e.g. on nutritional supplements to health professionals.
4F15	Support MUST (or equivalent screening) and nutritional support training by sharing practical experience and supporting colleagues to develop the skills and confidence to deliver scoring.
4F16	Apply and provide individual, or group, health promotion and wellbeing advice, following appropriate training and/or development.
4F17	Successfully complete and effectively apply relevant training appropriate to the dietetic setting.
4F18	Demonstrate effective role modelling, provide coaching, and supporting better conversations and managing change within dietetic practice.

Level 4 - Leadership Pillar – (See 1-4 core KSBS [Key Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours \(KSBs\) Statements | NMAHP Development Framework](#))

Reference code	Speciality key knowledge, skills, and behaviours
4L5	Analyse and compile priority listing of caseload.
4L6	Contribute to discharge decisions guided by the dietitian.
4L7	Support the management of health and safety through risk identification, assessment, and equipment checks, contributing to safe service delivery with appropriate oversight.
4L8	Demonstrate professional and collaborative behaviour by acting as a positive role model, taking initiative, and supporting colleagues (including students) through sharing best practice, mentoring, and contributing to induction and development activities.
4L9	Manage the stock room, supplies and the provisions.
4L10	Collaborate with other professionals such as other AHPs etc.
4L11	Collaborate with key partners regarding Government policies and how to implement these.
4L12	Chair meetings with other team members.
4L13	Actively participate in local or national working groups where appropriate.

Level 4 - Service Improvement Pillar - (See 1-5 core KSBS [Key Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours \(KSBs\) Statements | NMAHP Development Framework](#))

Reference code	Core key knowledge, skills, and behaviours
4S6	Participate and contributes to key learning from adverse events e.g. team-based review.
4S7	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 and analysis.
4S8	Contribute to service evaluation activities, including supporting the design and implementation of questionnaires and other feedback tools, within scope of practice and under appropriate supervision.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework (SCQF)

SCQF is the national qualifications framework. Senior Healthcare support workers are normally working at SCQF level 7 and Assistant Practitioners at SCQF level 8. There are some example qualifications in the table below. The minimum SCQF level for entry into the NMAHP professions is Level 9 (Ordinary Degree). Advanced Practice has been mapped to SCQF Level 11 study (Master's level). It is neither necessary nor desirable to map all post-registration education to academic levels, but where it is appropriate, the following can be used as a guide.

More information can be found at - [Interactive Framework | Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework \(scqf.org.uk\)](https://www.scqf.org.uk)

Career Framework level	Minimum associated SCQF level
2 Healthcare Support Worker	SCQF Level 6 – examples include: + SVQ Healthcare Support (Clinical) + SVQ Social Services + Healthcare Modern Apprenticeships: Health Care Support (clinical) + Modern Apprenticeships: Social Services and Healthcare
3 Senior Healthcare Support Worker	SCQF Level 7 – examples include: + SVQ Healthcare Support (Clinical) + SVQ Social Services & Healthcare + HNC Healthcare Practice + HNC Occupational Therapy Support + PDA Promoting Positive Behaviour + PDA Promoting Excellence in Dementia Skilled Practice + PDA Developing Professional Practice in Health and Social Care + PDA Health and Social Care: Administration of Medicine + OU – K102 -Introducing Health and Social Care

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + OU – Certificate of Higher Education in Healthcare Practice + OU – K104, Introduction to Healthcare Practice Modern Apprenticeships: Health Care Support (Clinical) Modern Apprenticeships: Social Services and Healthcare
4 Assistant Practitioner	<p>SCQF Level 8 – examples include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + 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 Occupational Therapy Support + PDA Podiatry Support + OU – Diploma of Higher Education in Health and Social Care + Higher Education Diploma: Wellbeing and Enablement
5 Practitioner	Level 9 – Ordinary Degree level (For AHP Paramedicine degree only)
6 Senior Practitioner	Level 10 – Honours Degree level
7 Advanced Practitioner	Level 11 – Master’s Degree level
8 Consultant Practitioner	Level 11/12 – Master’s/Doctorate level

Appendix 2: Reference list

Ministry of Justice (2012) *Public sector equality duty*. Available: [Public sector equality duty - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

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Public Services Delivery Scotland

PSD Scotland
Gyle Square
1 South Gyle Crescent
Edinburgh
EH12 9EB
Tel: 0131 275 6000
www.publicservicesdelivery.scot

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