

NURSE ACCREDITATION

Core Competency Framework



1. CORE COMPETENCIES: CLINICAL KNOWLEDGE AND MANAGEMENT

Expected Objective:

The Arrhythmia Nurse will be competent in maintaining a systematic and efficient clinic that meets the needs of the patients, staff and the service regards to diversity and respecting different cultures, religions, disabilities etc.

Competencies			
	Nurse	Assessor	Date/Comments
1.1 Uses a systematic approach to assess the patients. Practise in compliance with their code of professional conduct and within the scope for practice, being responsible and accountable for their decisions, actions and omissions at this level of practice			
1.2 Demonstrate a critical understanding of their broadened level of responsibility and autonomy and the limits of own competence and professional scope of practice, including when working with complexity, risk, uncertainty and incomplete information			
1.3 Has knowledge and understanding of the patient journey process, from initial referral to admission to the ward and plans accordingly. Ensures patient is fully informed of all aspects of their care in relation to presenting problem.			

<p>1.4 Completes referral documentation accurately and liaises closely with relevant administration staff in relation to appointments and potential booking issues. Has ability to problem solve efficiently and effectively in relation to patient's appointments, ensuring a safe and appropriate outcome.</p>			
<p>1.5 Use expertise and decision-making skills to inform clinical reasoning approaches when dealing with differentiated and undifferentiated individual presentations and complex situations, synthesising information from multiple sources to make appropriate, evidence-based judgements and or diagnosis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures that relevant documentation and referral for tests (ECG, echocardiogram, ambulatory, CT scans etc.) are completed 			
<p>1.6 Exercise professional judgement and use expertise and decision-making to initiate, evaluate and modify a range of interventions including managing the risk appropriately.</p>			

<p>1.7 Able to work in partnership with other members of the clinic team to ensure appointments are effective and represent complete episodes of care (i.e. all relevant tests completed or ordered, patient advice education undertaken, shared decision-making evident patient outcome clearly documented).</p>			
<p>1.8 Liaises with EP Consultant to ensure that any issues are highlighted to them and actioned, as required, in advance of patient treatment/admission.</p>			

2. CORE COMPETENCIES: INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Expected Objective:

The Arrhythmia Nurse demonstrates sound interpersonal skills during interactions with patients and their significant others during pre-operative assessment.

Competencies			
	Nurse	Assessor	Date/Comments
2.1.1 Demonstrates confidence during the consultation.			
2.1.2 Communicates in a clear, audible tone and demonstrates good non-verbal skills.			
2.1.3 Adapts communication styles in ways which are appropriate to different people i.e. using video/diagrams to elaborate the medical conditions; involve interpreter/translator services			
2.1.4 Communicates with patients and significant others in a professional manner and at a level and pace appropriate to them.			

2.1.5 Demonstrates empathy for patient and significant others.			
2.1.6 Encourages interaction by the use of open rather than closed questions.			
2.1.7 Able to act as a facilitator by encouraging patient/significant others to share information.			
2.1.8 Encourages patient to express thoughts and feelings appropriately.			
2.1.9 Pursues a logical sequence without over-riding patient's flow of information.			
2.1.10 Organises time constructively and is fully aware of time constraints.			
2.1.11 Supports patients and significant others during difficult situations arising in the clinical area e.g. imparting bad news or following an unexpected event.			
2.1.12 Shared decision-making is evident in the consultation and patient is satisfied with the treatment plan.			

3. CORE COMPETENCIES: PATIENT CONSULTATION

Expected Objective:

The Arrhythmia Nurse confidently and competently conducts a patient consultation within a framework that includes the following elements; opening the consultation, patient assessment, history taking and physical examination (following completion of the physical examination unit of learning), information giving and informed consent (written consent should only be obtained if undertaken Trust Consent training and deemed as competent), closing the consultation and team work.

Competencies			
	Nurse	Assessor	Date/Comments
<u>3.1 Opening consultation</u> 3 1.1 Establishes a suitable environment. 3.1.2 Gives verbal greeting and refers to patient by name. 3. 1.3 Introduces self by name and role.			
<u>3.2 Patient assessment</u> 3.2.1 Adopts and demonstrates a structured approach to patient assessment that includes consent, physical assessment and exploration of psychological and social status and includes health education and promotion as applicable.			

<p><u>3.3 History Taking</u></p> <p>3.3.1 Using a structured approach obtains and documents an accurate account of patient's health history.</p> <p>3.3.2 Aware of Red flags in patient's history / family history and clinical exam for high risk of sudden cardiac death and inherited cardiac conditions requiring referral for genetic counselling.</p> <p>3.3.3 As applicable, discusses findings with other healthcare professionals.</p>			
<p><u>3.4 Physical Examination</u></p> <p>3.4.1 Carries out physical examination, using advanced assessment skills.</p> <p>3.4.2 Identifies and requests and/or performs appropriate investigations, based on patient assessment and examination.</p> <p>3.4.3 Demonstrates ability to distinguish significant and non-significant findings in relation to patient history-taking and physical examination.</p>			
<p><u>3.5 Information Giving and Informed Consent</u></p> <p>3.5.1 Gives appropriate verbal and written information about arrhythmia management, lifestyle modification, treatment plans, pharmacotherapy and procedural risks.</p>			

<p><u>3.6 Obtaining Written Consent for Procedures</u></p> <p>3.6.1 Undertakes consent training if deemed competent as per trust policy.</p> <p>3.6.2 Obtains patient's informed consent for procedure in writing and document this accurately on the consent form and within clinical records.</p> <p>3.6.3 Acknowledges limitations and can identify when unable to obtain written consent and discusses this with the operator in advance of the procedure.</p>			
<p><u>3.7.Pregnancy & Contraception</u></p> <p>3.7.1. Demonstrates awareness of procedural risks associated with pregnancy and counsels appropriately, including liaising with the team.</p> <p>3.7.2. Demonstrates awareness of counselling pre-menopausal women on risks of pregnancy associated with underlying cardiac condition and potential iatrogenic effects of medications.</p> <p>3.7.3. Awareness of maternal risk associated with underlying cardiac conditions.</p> <p>3.7.4. Awareness local women's health services and how to refer to for contraceptive advice.</p>			

<p>3.7.5. Awareness of need for different contraceptive advise depending on underlying cardiac condition.</p> <p>3.7.6. Aware of local obstetric cardiology service and how to refer women for pre pregnancy counselling.</p>			
<p><u>3.8. Closing consultation</u></p> <p>3.8.1. Indicates when consultation time is nearly up and begins to complete.</p> <p>3.8.2. Summarises main points and checks patient understands. Uses 'Teach back' to ensure patient has understood main points and provides opportunity for patient to ask questions.</p> <p>3.8.3. Develops a mutually agreed plan of action for treatment or discharge. Demonstrating shared decision-making that includes onward referrals as applicable.</p> <p>3.8.4. Recognises when referral is required.</p>			
<p><u>3.9.Team work</u></p> <p>3.9.1. Ensures discussion of significant aspects of patient assessment with relevant members of team.</p>			

4. CORE COMPETENCIES: RHYTHM ANALYSIS

Expected Objectives:

The Arrhythmia Nurse will be able to autonomously demonstrate ECG & rhythm interpretation skills using a comprehensive approach.

**Senior Cardiac Physiologist can be an assessor.*

Competencies			
	Nurse	Assessor	Date/Comments
4.1. Atrial Premature Beats			
4.2 Atrial Fibrillation			
4.3 Atrial Flutter			
4.4 Atypical Atrial Flutter			
4.5 Atrial Paced			
4.6 Atrial Tachycardia			
4.7. ARVC (<i>EPSILON WAVES</i>)			
4.8. AVRT			
4.9. AVNRT			

4.10 Brugada Pattern			
4.11 First Degree AV Block			
4.12 Long QT Syndrome			
4.13 Pre-excitation consistent with WPW syndrome			
4.14 Second Degree AV Block, Mobitz II			
4.15 Second Degree AV block, Mobitz I (Wenckebach)			
4.16 Sinus Bradycardia			
4.17 Sinus Node Disease			
4.18 Sinus Pause			
4.19 Sinus tachycardia			
4.20 Third Degree AV block (Complete Heart Block)			
4.21 Torsade de pointes			
4.22 Ventricular Fibrillation			
4.23 Ventricular Paced			

4.24 Ventricular Premature Beats			
4.25 Ventricular Standstill			
4.26 Ventricular Tachycardia including RVOT; LVOT			

Evidence of Competencies achieved in identifying and analysing the ECG rhythm

- Describe any actions to be taken following ECG interpretation.
- Discuss the priorities of care for example if the patient is compromised or ECG abnormality is detected.
- Demonstrated the ability to rule out artefact

5A. CORE COMPETENCIES: CARDIAC PHARMACOLOGY FOCUS ON ANTI-ARRHYTHMIC MEDICINES (CLASS IA ANTIARRHYTHMICS/CLASS IB ANTIARRHYTHMICS/CLASS IC ANTIARRHYTHMICS/CLASS II ANTIARRHYTHMIC DRUGS/CLASS III ANTIARRHYTHMIC DRUGS/CLASS IV ANTIARRHYTHMIC DRUGS)

Competencies			
	Nurse	Assessor	Date/Comments
5.1 Demonstrates knowledge of the drugs licensed for use in arrhythmia			
5.2 Arrhythmia Specialist Nurse prescribers safely prescribe, initiate, titrate and monitor the treatment effects.			
5.3 Arrhythmia Specialist Nurse who are not prescribers advise the GP/clinician to consider prescribing antiarrhythmic medications or anticoagulation as per national guidelines.			
5.4 Understands side effects and possible drug interactions of the medication and identify when necessary to discontinue treatment.			
5.5 Demonstrates knowledge of medications interactions especially non cardiac drugs which could prolong QT interval			

5.6 Communicates the prescribing decisions to other healthcare professionals with rationale and non-adherence issues including referral consultants; GP; pharmacist; anticoagulation clinic.			
5.7 Documenting the medications plan appropriately in patient records			
5.8 Provides oral and written information to patients and discusses therapy options with patients.			

5B. CORE COMPETENCIES: CARDIAC PHARMACOLOGY ON ANTI-COAGULATIONS (INSERT MEDICATION AS APPROPRIATE E.G. WARFARIN; DABIGATRAN; APIXABAN; RIVAROXABAN; EDOXABAN)

***PLEASE USING THE SEPARATE SHEET FOR EACH DRUGS**

***Pharmacist who is non-medical prescriber can be an assessor**

Expected Objective:

The Arrhythmia Nurse will demonstrate understanding of the rationale for the use the above drug in conjunction with local/national guidance in appropriate patients with arrhythmia

Competencies			
	Nurse	Assessor	Date/Comments
5b.1 Identifies patients for whom the treatment is suitable.			
5b.2 Demonstrates knowledge of the drugs licensed for use in arrhythmia condition and regime for use.			
5b.3 Arrhythmia Specialist Nurse prescribers safely prescribe, initiate, titrate and monitor the treatment effects.			
5b.4 Arrhythmia Specialist Nurses who are not prescribers advise the GP/clinician to consider prescribing anticoagulation as per national guidelines.			

5b.5 Understands side effects and possible drug interactions of the medication and identify when necessary to discontinue treatment.			
5b.6 Demonstrates knowledge of medications interactions which could increase the risk of bleeding such as dual-antiplatelet (Aspirin, Clopidogrel, Ticagrelor, Prasugrel)			
5b.7 Communicates the prescribing decisions to other healthcare professionals with rationale and to address non-adherence issues including referral consultants; GP; pharmacist; Warfarin clinic/anticoagulation clinic.			
5b.8 Documenting the medications plan within patient medical records			
5b.9 Provides oral and written information to patients and discusses therapy options and importance of anticoagulation in AF for stroke prevention with patients.			

6. CORE COMPETENCIES: PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

Competencies			
	Nurse	Assessor	Date/Comments
<p>6.1. To provide emotional reassurance and support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always act as the patient's advocate • Demonstrate kindness and compassion in all care undertaken • Promote a holistic approach to all care undertaken • Alleviate fear, stress and anxiety • Ensure the patient is comfortable • Empower patients to regain self-concept and self-control • Give adequate explanations regarding care and treatment in a language the patient can understand and repeat these explanations as often as needed 			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt appropriate communication aids • Encourage and motivate patients to achieve independence in relevant tasks • Include patients and family in the development of care plans and treatment choices • Be open and honest with patients and families and demonstrate empathy towards their situation • Encourage patient to adjust to living with arrhythmia condition including acceptance and commitment • Respect cultural and spiritual needs • Refer for solution focused therapy or psychological support from relevant multi-disciplinary team members if appropriate • Where used keep a clear and accurate account of the patient's progress in their diary • Encourage patients and their relatives to discuss their experiences of being in arrhythmia treatment, in order for staff to learn from this 			
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide patients and relatives with written information • Signpost patients and relatives to support groups and/or forums (i.e. Arrhythmia Alliance; STARS; Implantable Defibrillator Support groups; Heart failure support groups) <p><i>*Use website platform as appropriate</i></p>			
<p>6.2. Exercise professional judgement to manage risk appropriately and ability to work cohesively with the wider professional team. Familiar with referral pathways such as local psychologist, local wellbeing support group to discuss individual cases and prevent escalation of distressing symptoms.</p>			
<p>6.3. Have an awareness of psychological strategies to support patients with on-going psychological needs (i.e.: gradual exposure, anxiety management, depression management).</p>			
<p>6.4. Establish a main person who acts as a point of contact for patients suffers with arrhythmia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate information clearly taking into account the needs of patients, providing written information if necessary, being aware of what information can be given over the phone • Document appropriate communication in line with local policy (e.g. care plan/case notes/communication folder) 			

7. CORE COMPETENCIES: LIFESTYLE MODIFICATION MANAGEMENT IN ARRHYTHMIA

Expected Objective:

The Arrhythmia Nurse has a teaching and health promoting role to help the patient to adopt healthier lifestyle habits and awareness to behaviour changes models and the importance of their role in this.

Competencies			
	Nurse	Assessor	Date/Comments
<p>7.1. Demonstrates knowledge on evidence-based lifestyle changes in managing arrhythmia burden.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to provides relevant information about the modifiable lifestyle interventions: <p>7.1.1. Smoking cessation</p> <p>7.1.2. Alcohol Consumption</p> <p>7.1.3. Weight management</p> <p>7.1.4. Sleep apnoea</p> <p>7.1.5. Stimulant-artificial sources of caffeine, as well as stimulants found in over-the-counter and prescription medications</p> <p>7.1.6. Hypertension management</p>			

<p>7.1.7. Diabetes management</p> <p>7.1.8. Physical activities</p> <p>7.1.9. Diet</p> <p>7.1.10. Healthy mind-set and stress management</p>			
<p>7.2. Recognises and explores lifestyle modifiable arrhythmia risk factors and works with the patient to develop strategies to support and improve adherence of the lifestyle modifications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give information to patients about web-based support including NHS Choices, Smoking cessation group, AF association, British Heart Foundation, Primary care services, alcohol advisory services 			
<p>7.3. Communicates the lifestyle modification strategy to other healthcare professionals including meeting with a dietician, cardiac rehab, smoking cessation team; working with a sleep clinic to treat sleep apnoea, diabetes nurses to manage their diabetes status, primary care nurses for hypertension management, working with psychologist, exercise team or local weight management programme and ensures patients are referred for specialist services.</p>			

8. CORE COMPETENCIES: TEACHING AND ASSESSING SKILLS

Expected Objective:

The Arrhythmia Nurse has a teaching and assessing role within the arrhythmia team and acts as a mentor providing support, guidance and advice. The arrhythmia nurse should have attended a recognised teaching course such as mentor preparation, learning and assessing.

Competencies			
	Nurse	Assessor	Date/Comments
8.1. Able to act as a Nurse or Cardiac Physiologist or Healthcare Scientist Assistant mentor and provides advice, support, information and guidance about the Arrhythmia service and the role of the Arrhythmia nurse.			
8.2. Able to help the Nurse/Cardiac Physiologist/ Healthcare Scientist Assistant to identify and meet his/her learning needs in relation to the competency training package.			
8.3. Encourages Nurse/Cardiac Physiologist/HealthCare Assistant and supports them to develop skills and knowledge.			
8.4. Supervises the Nurse/Cardiac Physiologist/ HealthCare Assistant as they develop their skills and knowledge and provides feedback on relevant aspects of performance.			

8.5. Maintains awareness of own level of competence and provides evidence of this.			
<p>8.6. Has an involvement in teaching and training of staff within cardiology and other directorates.</p> <p>8.6.1 Able to identify any training needs relating to arrhythmia management.</p> <p>8.6.2 Able to organise efficiently and effectively study days for areas relating to arrhythmia management.</p> <p>8.6.3 Evaluates any training performed and responds to feedback.</p>			
8.7. Undertakes appraisals of others with Cardiac Nurse Specialist team and Cardiac Physiology according to Trust appraisal document.			

9. CORE COMPETENCIES: DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Expected Objective:

The Arrhythmia Nurse will be responsible for ensuring that standards of practice for arrhythmia service are maintained and act as a key player in initiating, taking forward and promoting service developments and quality improvements projects.

Competencies			
	Nurse	Assessor	Date/Comments
<u>9.1 Maintenance of Service (Leadership & Collaborative practice):</u> 9.1.1 Act as a clinical role model/advocate for developing and delivering an arrhythmia service that is responsive to changing requirements, informed by an understanding of local population health needs, agencies and networks.			
9.1.2. Demonstrates awareness of up-to-date research and developments with Arrhythmia related care.			
9.1.3. Identifies areas that need development and improvement taking into consideration the needs of the service and local improvement priorities.			
9.1.4 Attends and actively participates in relevant team and cardiology meetings.			

9.1.5 Follows up actions that arise from meetings.			
9.1.6 Ensure that patient has information relating to all aspects of the service and update this as per trust policy.			
9.1.7 Provides clear and accurate rationale for supporting clinical decision making.			
9.1.8. Provides patients with a positive experience with specialist assessment and timely interventions.			
<u>9.2 Service Development (Improving quality and developing practice):</u> 9.2.1 Proactive in identifying and taking forward areas of development within the Arrhythmia service.			
9.2.2 Critically assesses and addresses own learning needs, negotiating a personal development plan that reflects the on-going professional development across the four pillars of advanced clinical practice.			
9.2.3. Engage in self-directed learning, critically reflecting to maximise clinical skills and knowledge, as well as own potential to develop both care and services.			
9.2.4. Critically examines the alternatives to care providing rationale to support and change current practice.			

i.e. there is not syncope clinic in the local trust but you have collaborate with other arrhythmia service to develop services locally.			
9.2.5 Demonstrates the ability to critically analyse the evidence that underpins Arrhythmia practice.			
9.2.6 Participates in patient and staff surveys aimed at improving practice within the Arrhythmia service. Supporting the wider team to build capacity and capability through work-based and inter-professional learning and the application of learning to practice.			
9.2.7 Actively involved in the audit of aspects of the arrhythmia nurse-led service and initiating any changes to practice that may have been identified.			
9.2.8 Demonstrates understanding of how the Arrhythmia nurse-led service fits into the trust strategy and strives to meet this.			
9.2.9 Advocates for, and contributes to, a culture of organisational learning to inspire and, motivate existing staff. Facilitate collaboration of the wider team and support peer review process to identify individual and team learning.			

9.2.10 Uses reflective practice to evaluate care and focus decision making in response to patient's needs.			
9.2.11 Actively develops cardiology protocols and follows trust approval process including at clinical governance meeting.			
9.2.12. To remain up-to-date with radiology requesting Ionising Radiation Medical Exposure Regulation (IRMER) as per Trust guidelines.			
9.2.13 To remain up-to-date with non-medical prescribing as per Trust guidelines.			
<u>9.3.Research</u> 9.3.1. Critically engage in research activity, adhering good research practice guidance especially in arrhythmia service, so that evidenced-based strategies are developed and applied enhance quality, safety, productivity and value for money.			
9.3.2. Evaluate and audit own and others' clinical practice, selecting and applying valid, reliable methods, then acting on the findings.			

9.3.3. Critically appraises and synthesises the outcome of relevant research, evaluation and audit, using the results to underpin own practice and to inform that of others.			
9.3.4. Take a critical approach to identify gaps in the evidence base and its application to practice, alerting appropriate individuals and organisations to these and how they might be addressed in a safe and pragmatic way.			
9.3.5. Actively identify potential need for further research to strengthen evidence for best practice. This may involve acting as an educator, leader, innovator and contributor to research activity and or seeking out and applying for research funding.			

10. SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES: INPATIENT MANAGEMENT

Expected Objective:

The Arrhythmia Nurse will be competent in the management of arrhythmia inpatients to ensure an efficient service with the admission, discharge and review of patients including the coordination of patients' transfers as appropriate. They will demonstrate effective communication skills within the multidisciplinary team to ensure that patients are dealt with in a timely manner.

Competencies			
	Nurse	Assessor	Date/Comments
10.1 Able to use a systematic approach to the inpatient caseload.			
10.2 Able to work in partnership with other members of the MDT to ensure patients are safely managed and prioritised accordingly.			
10.3 Has knowledge and understanding of the patient journey process for elective and non-elective admissions.			
10.4 Able to co-ordinate admission of patients from device clinic or telephone consultation in conjunction with the bed manager, ward staff, patient and the family.			
10.5 Ensures that relevant documentation and referral for tests (blood forms) are completed as required.			

10.6 Has ability to problem solved efficiently and effectively in relation to patient's admission ensuring a safe and appropriate outcome.			
10.7 <u>Patient information</u>			
10.7.1 Able to ascertain patient's current level of understanding of proposed cardiac procedure.			
10.7.2 Gives the appropriate level of verbal and written information about cardiac condition.			
10.7.3 Able to give appropriate verbal and written information relating to pre and post-procedural including procedural benefits and risks ensuring that patients can make an informed decision.			
10.7.4 Gives appropriate verbal and written information about expected recovery, discharge arrangements and lifestyle implications if relevant.			
10.7.5 Provides an opportunity for the patient/significant other to ask questions and express concerns.			
10.7.6 Provides opportunity to discuss relevant health education and promotion issues.			

10.8 Liaises closely with ward/lab staff/operators to ensure that any issues are highlighted to them and act as required.			
10.9 Able to discuss inpatients and problem solve at daily team meeting and update handover records accurately with the relevant information and distribute accordingly.			
10.11 Able to discharge patients efficiently and complete necessary documentation in a timely manner.			
10.12 Documents complications relating to procedure appropriately on computer system.			

BHRS Core Competency Framework for BHRS accreditation – adapted from BHRS Competency Framework: Original author: Fang Feng Ting, Arrhythmia Nurse Specialist, Watford General Hospital

Edited for the BHRS exam accreditation for Arrhythmia Nurse Specialists by Anya Murray and Catherine Laventure on 17/09/2024