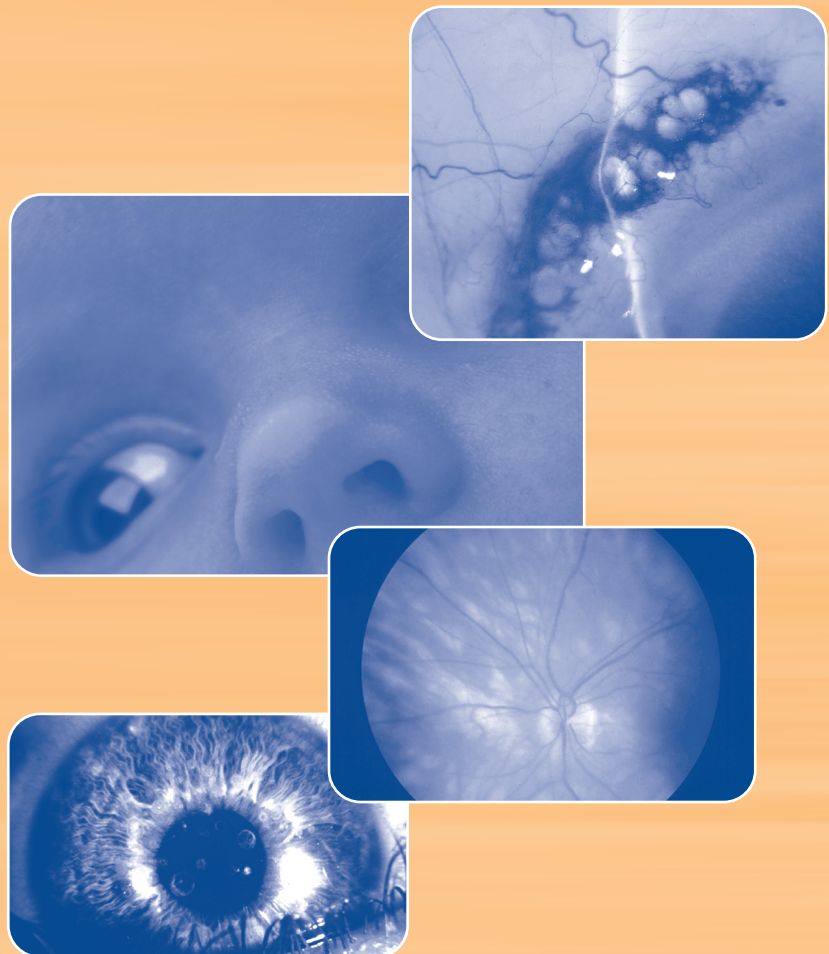


# Competencies:

an integrated career  
and competency framework  
for ophthalmic nursing



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### **Janet Marsden**

Chair  
Ophthalmic Nursing Forum

# Competencies:

## *an integrated career and competency framework for ophthalmic nursing*

Approved until December 2005

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# Foreword

This competency framework is the result of five years of extensive work and enquiry. The catalyst for this work was the recognition of the need for a competence framework that enables ophthalmic nurses to describe and show their competence in a complex and little understood nursing specialty. The lack of access to formal education, the variability of educational provision, and the lack of portability of complex skills were key issues raised by ophthalmic nurses when the competence framework was initially discussed.

During the development of this framework we consulted with ophthalmic nurses from every different health care setting, region and UK country, together with service users. We have also involved specialists in other areas such as primary care, visual rehabilitation, education and management to ensure that the framework is fit for purpose. We also wanted to try to future proof it by considering areas where we think ophthalmic nurses will be working in the future.

This document has been written by ophthalmic nurses, for ophthalmic nurses. Our aim is to provide a comprehensive document that will help nurses to provide a high standard of ophthalmic nursing throughout the UK.

Although the document has gone through an extensive consultation process, the forum's steering group would welcome further comments/suggestions from practitioners to ensure the framework remains current and relevant to everyone involved in the care of people with ophthalmic problems.

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# Introduction

Competence can be defined as: “The state of having the knowledge, judgement, skills, energy, experience and motivation required to respond adequately to the demands of one’s professional responsibilities” (Roach, 1992).

This differs from the *competence* approach used in the UK vocational qualification movement, where there has been emphasis on the job and not the person, and on minimum standards rather than superior performance. Competence also emphasises workplace performance instead of underpinning knowledge.

Nurses are competent when they have the skills and abilities required for lawful, safe and effective professional practice without supervision.

The development of this framework was led by the RCN Ophthalmic Nursing Forum steering group and supported by RCN staff, following the recognition by forum members of the need for a framework in the context of a number of professional and political factors including:

- ◆ Agenda for Change (DH, 1999)
- ◆ need for leadership in specialist nursing
- ◆ need for the development of UK-wide standards of specialist ophthalmic nursing
- ◆ inconsistent provision of, and access to, ophthalmic nursing education throughout the UK
- ◆ need for professional accreditation of skills and knowledge in practice
- ◆ NHS Plan (DH, 2000), and its equivalent in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
- ◆ increased focus on work-based and lifelong learning plus supervision
- ◆ National Service Frameworks and service modernisation
- ◆ increasing patient and user expectations
- ◆ *The Future Nurse* (RCN, 2004)
- ◆ pioneering work by the RCN Accident and Emergency Association and the Faculty of Emergency Nursing.

## 1

# How to use the framework

## What is a competency framework?

A nurse is competent when they have the skills and abilities required for lawful, safe and effective professional practice without direct supervision. There are broadly three models of competence:

- ◆ what people need to achieve – outcomes (standards) models
- ◆ what people need to possess – educational models
- ◆ what people are like – personal competence models.

This framework uses an outcomes competence model. Taking this approach focuses on the expectations of the person who is undertaking a particular area of work or work role. The document describes what knowledge and skills individuals need in order to achieve the specific outcomes or standards of ophthalmic health care.

## Using the competency framework

There are a number of ways this framework can be used to develop nurses' knowledge and skills. Here are some examples:

- ◆ tool for individual nurses to assess their own competence and training needs
- ◆ formal appraisal system to assess competence and identify training needs
- ◆ means of planning an individual nurse's career pathway
- ◆ method of developing a comprehensive induction programme for new staff
- ◆ framework for the development of individual portfolios
- ◆ information for nurses considering a career in ophthalmic practice.

## Benefits of the framework

The competency framework not only provides benefits for nurses, but also for their employers, patients and the public.

Using the framework will help nurses to:

- ◆ deliver consistently high standards of care
- ◆ identify your level of practice and plan your career in a more structured way
- ◆ pinpoint education and development needs to help you realise your potential more effectively
- ◆ seize opportunities to influence the direction of nursing.

The framework will give employers:

- ◆ a model to ensure consistently high standards of care
- ◆ clearer insight into the expertise and competence of staff. For example, to assess risk management evaluation.

Patients and the public will benefit from the framework because it will ensure:

- ◆ consistently high standards of patient care
- ◆ increased effectiveness to service provision
- ◆ improved access and choice for care provision.

## How do I get started?

The levels of competence range from competent nurse and experienced proficient nurse, through to senior practitioner/expert nurse. You will need to look at the competency statements, and decide where you fit on the career trajectory in terms of development and what you already do.

## 2

## Assessing competence

It is generally accepted that there is a need for a common approach to the assessment of competence in ophthalmic health care settings. By doing this, services can be reassured that there is transferability in the skills that are required for patient care within, and across services.

### How you produce evidence to demonstrate competence

You are responsible for developing your own portfolios of evidence for each competency in order to demonstrate that you have achieved it at the identified/desired level. Forms of evidence that you can use include case histories, self-appraisal via a reflective diary, 360-degree feedback, verification of practice and structured observation of practice.

So, when you gather evidence it is important to consider the following:

- ◆ ensure that you understand what the competency statement is asking of you
- ◆ review any existing work that could be used, and do not re-invent the wheel
- ◆ identify whether the existing evidence is appropriate. An example could be, if you attend a study day to prepare you for injecting botulinum toxin, but have not practiced the skill in a clinical setting. Your certificate of attendance on its own will not show evidence of competence, and you would have to make arrangements for supervised practice. However, if you have undergone training, and have evidence of supervised practice and injecting botulinum toxin on a regular basis, this evidence should be sufficient
- ◆ consider what else you may need to do in developing evidence. Are you familiar with a reflective model? Will someone be giving you feedback on your practice? Do you have further developmental needs and have you considered how you might address them?
- ◆ think about using evidence that covers several competencies. For example, one case study may demonstrate that you have used a variety of knowledge and skills in treating a patient. In this instance you should be able to triangulate evidence against several competencies.

### What is evidence of competence?

There is a variety of material that you can collect to capture evidence of competence. Different approaches should be combined, rather than selecting one approach used in isolation. Bear in mind that these suggestions are not exhaustive, and alternative forms of evidence may be appropriate in different settings:

- ◆ observation and critical analysis of everyday practice
- ◆ audit and notes review
- ◆ case presentations
- ◆ observed, structured clinical examinations (OSCEs)
- ◆ excerpts from a reflective diary, with self-assessment of competence, identified development needs and an action plan
- ◆ testimony of the individual's contribution to nursing practice, such as the co-ordination of care management for an individual or a group of patients
- ◆ active contribution to policy groups, developing or revising guidelines, standards, or audits
- ◆ evidence of change or project management
- ◆ certificate of attendance and an evaluation of the outcomes of study days or courses
- ◆ demonstration of evidence based practice, with supportive literature, protocols etc
- ◆ planning, delivering and evaluating teaching sessions
- ◆ individual performance review
- ◆ 360 degree feedback process
- ◆ personal and professional development portfolio
- ◆ active involvement in clinical supervision, mentorship and multidisciplinary meetings
- ◆ demonstrable ability to liaise with the multidisciplinary team and external agencies
- ◆ a relevant contribution to a verbal discussion about patient care that is appropriate for the individual's level
- ◆ contribution to local or national documents, or journals about service delivery, education etc
- ◆ leading or contributing to a journal club or other in-house teaching and learning sessions
- ◆ written documentation about patient care that is appropriate for the individual's level.

The strength of the competency framework lends itself to the assessment of nursing practice at local level in partnership with medical colleagues. However, assessment may also take place through higher education university courses, and formal examination. Practitioners who carry out the assessments should have adequate expertise and training in the assessment and mentoring process, together with a higher level knowledge of ophthalmic nursing practice.

## 3

## Defining the levels of clinical practice

The new Agenda for Change (AfC) career structure has replaced clinical grades for nurses, midwives and health visitors. This structure has incorporated the new nurse, midwife and health visitor consultant posts that are significantly extending the career opportunities for nurses who wish to climb the career ladder, but remain in clinical practice.

AfC applies to all NHS organisations and sets a UK framework for pay, terms and conditions of employment. It means that all health care staff have clear and consistent development objectives; can develop in such a way that they can apply the knowledge and skills appropriate to their level of responsibility; and are helped to identify and develop knowledge and skills that will support their career progression (referred to as the Knowledge and Skills Framework).

### Levels of clinical practice

This competency framework focuses on knowledge, skills and interventions that are heightened or specific to nurses working in any ophthalmic setting. Although the intention is for this framework to have a stand-alone function it should be used in conjunction with other frameworks that focus on core skills and competencies for all qualified nurses. In addition the specific frameworks developed by specialist nurses can be used to support and enhance ophthalmic nursing practice.

The framework has three levels of clinical practice and has the potential to be cross-referenced with the Knowledge and Skills Framework in greater detail at a later date. There is also scope to add non-qualified (health care assistant) and consultant nurse levels as and when appropriate.

The three levels of clinical practice are:

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Level 1: competent nurse

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Level 2: experienced/proficient nurse

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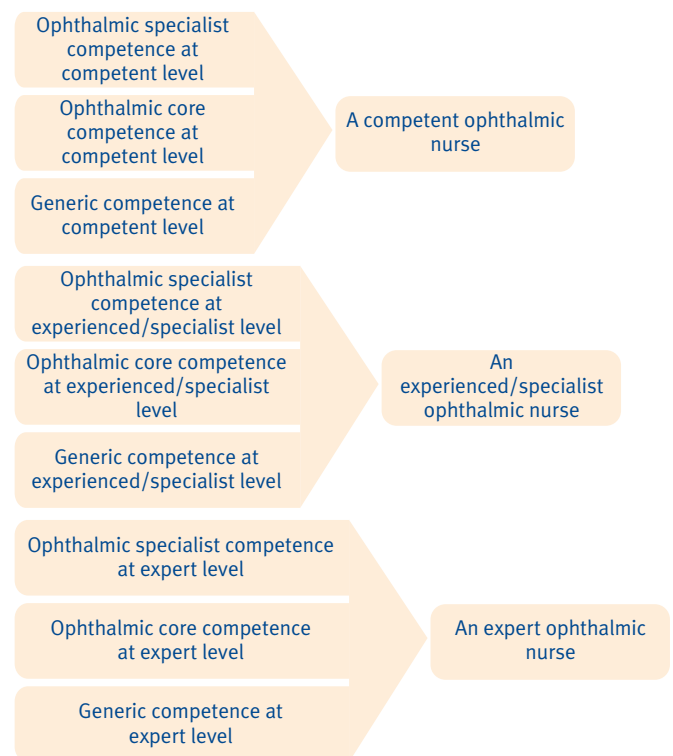
Level 3: senior practitioner/expert nurse.

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The framework is intended to:

- ◆ help individual nurses plan their professional development in the ophthalmic setting
- ◆ act as model of care for ophthalmic patients for nurses in other settings
- ◆ provide guidance to employers about expectations of competency at different levels of ophthalmic nursing practice
- ◆ act as a framework for educationalists to use when planning and revalidating educational provision
- ◆ reduce the *theory/practice* gap and show consistency across the ophthalmic sector
- ◆ capture the unique contribution to care that nurses working the ophthalmic environment make
- ◆ provide a model for use in the development of new ophthalmic nursing roles such as those in primary care or in visual rehabilitation
- ◆ provide a framework for career progression in relation to ophthalmic nursing.

#### Diagram of clinical practice levels



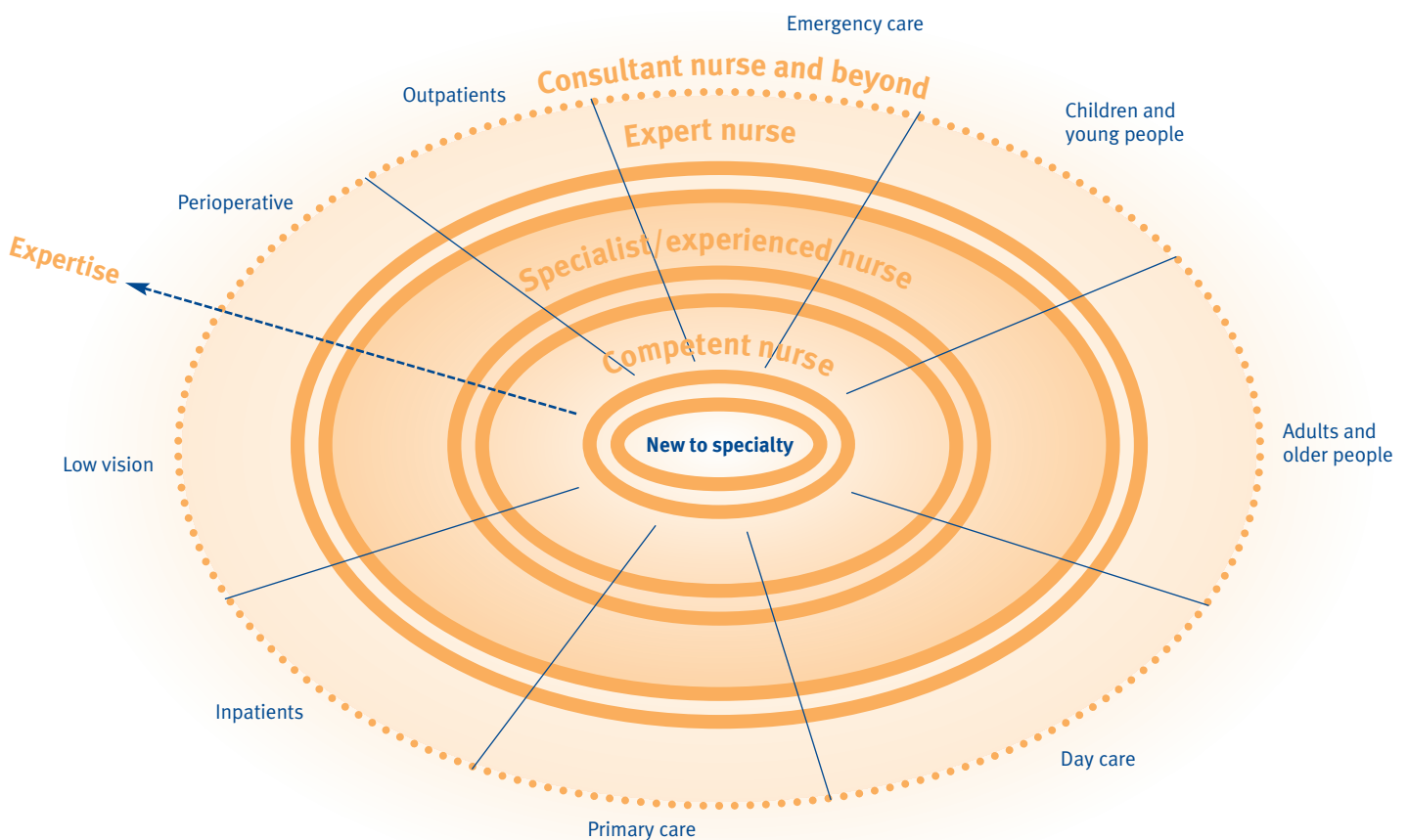
## 4

# The competency framework for ophthalmic nursing

It is hoped that this framework is widely adopted by nurses working in ophthalmic health care in the UK because its development has involved representatives from all four countries, and from all possible settings. Nurses have been involved in all stages of its evolution, and the final document reflects their contribution throughout. The result is a document that is valid and has ownership by all those involved in its construction.

## Ophthalmic nursing core competency diagram

Over the last five years most ophthalmic nurses have seen this diagram, or variations of it. This is our two-dimensional view of the model. The thick lines are core competencies for each level of ophthalmic practice, and the segments, are the specialist areas in which ophthalmic nurses practice. Each ophthalmic nurse is enabled, using the framework, to have an individual map based on this model – a pictorial representation of practice competence.



## Core competency: selecting and using holistic practice knowledge

Competent nurse	Experienced/proficient nurse	Senior practitioner/expert nurse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has a comprehensive working knowledge of the anatomy and physiology of body systems in relation to ophthalmic and related systems</li> <li>• demonstrates a basic understanding of healing processes in relation to ophthalmology</li> <li>• uses knowledge of normal physiology in relation to ophthalmic and related systems</li> <li>• uses knowledge of abnormal ocular pathology to anticipate effects on the person</li> <li>• demonstrates a basic knowledge of the pathophysiological presentations of conditions that are common to one's area of practice</li> <li>• recognises and describes signs of common conditions in own area of practice using a limited range of terminology</li> <li>• understand the principles of managing people with ophthalmic conditions and trauma</li> <li>• administers and provides advice on the pharmacology of commonly used drugs in own area of practice</li> <li>• understands the legal issues around the supply and instillation of ophthalmic medications</li> <li>• demonstrates an understanding of the terms myopia, hypermetropia and astigmatism and explain how these refractive errors are corrected</li> <li>• demonstrates an understanding of the principles involved in magnification</li> <li>• demonstrates an understanding of concave and convex lens</li> <li>• demonstrates an understanding of how the usage of a different light source can enhance print on a page without the use of magnification</li> <li>• identifies how the usage of different colours, textures and contrasts may help the visually impaired patient</li> <li>• accurately assesses all patients and recognises actual and potential problems that might require attention</li> <li>• adjusts assessment and history-taking to the life span, gender and cultural background of the presenting person</li> <li>• builds up a picture of and account for the wider situation when assessing and relating to patient</li> <li>• carries out basic ophthalmic investigations</li> <li>• demonstrates effective techniques of eye examination</li> <li>• demonstrates the ability to assess visual function</li> <li>• assesses the ability and motivation of the patient and carer to manage self care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses a full range of nursing strategies to relieve the psychological and spiritual impact of physical and emotional aspects of ocular pathology upon individuals, family, and supporters</li> <li>• assesses, prioritises and plans care for patients presenting with a range of ophthalmic conditions and trauma</li> <li>• is identified as, and leads on, aspects of Essence of Care/Fundamentals of Care initiatives in the department and/or other initiatives for developing practice expertise such as National Service Frameworks</li> <li>• acts proactively as an educator and resource to other professionals within and outside the ophthalmic setting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses expert knowledge to assess, prioritise, treat and safely refer or discharge a range of patients with ophthalmic problems</li> <li>• uses expertise to evaluate critically patient data in order to select and implement appropriate care for patients with ophthalmic problems</li> <li>• anticipates the effects of clinical diagnosis on the individual and family/supporters, adjusts care to enhance wellbeing and respond appropriately</li> <li>• anticipates the likely course of the patient's treatment process and use own specialist knowledge to effect best outcome</li> <li>• initiates, supplies, administers and evaluates effects of pharmacological interventions in line with national and local policy and clinical guidelines</li> <li>• prescribes medication in line with current legislation and DH standards</li> <li>• articulates and demonstrates how the department and service contributes to Essence of Care/Fundamentals of Care initiatives, National Service Frameworks or national standards</li> <li>• uses expert knowledge to create and promote creative and innovative solutions to practice problems</li> <li>• translates expert knowledge into forms available to all grades of ophthalmic and non-ophthalmic staff in terms of training and education.</li> </ul>

## Core competency: selecting and using holistic practice knowledge

Competent nurse	Experienced / proficient nurse	Senior practitioner/expert nurse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• documents clear and accurate information about the patient</li> <li>• knows how to access appropriate additional information about a patient and how and when it is appropriate to communicate that information</li> <li>• identifies risk behaviours in relation to compliance with care instructions</li> <li>• liaises between the patient/carers and other members of the multidisciplinary team, including other agencies, to optimise care</li> <li>• assesses pain and utilises effective methods of pain relief and side-effects</li> <li>• demonstrates suitable preparation of the patient undergoing ophthalmic procedures and the environment to enable the intervention to be undertaken, ensuring that health and safety, privacy and dignity and consent issues are met</li> <li>• develops knowledge of the possible psychological effects of an eye condition on a child</li> <li>• demonstrates an awareness of the possible effects of the child's eye condition on family and friends</li> <li>• demonstrates knowledge of the psychological effects of hospitalisation on children and their families</li> <li>• demonstrates a knowledge of the consent process in terms of correct identification of next-of-kin</li> <li>• knows the rights of minors who have reached the age of 16 and who can give consent to treatment</li> <li>• uses knowledge to identify, ameliorate and reports actual and potential risks to children</li> <li>• demonstrates knowledge of the anatomical differences in children</li> <li>• recognises if a child is in pain, particularly in relation to their eye condition and be able to access appropriate pain relieving strategies</li> <li>• assesses the child using recognised paediatric pain assessment tools appropriately</li> <li>• provides appropriate paediatric pain medication promptly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assesses holistically, prioritises and plans care for patients presenting with conditions common to one's area of practice</li> <li>• uses a structured approach to identify patient care needs</li> <li>• able to assess, plan and implement treatment plans</li> <li>• interprets a range of clinical data in relation to ocular injury and conditions in order to facilitate timely and effective interventions</li> <li>• initiates appropriate ocular investigations</li> <li>• assimilates the information gathered at assessment to provide the rationale for clinical decision making</li> <li>• responds to identified patient risk behaviours and minimises their impact on compliance with care instructions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses expert knowledge to evaluate data critically to select and implement appropriate care</li> <li>• accurately conducts an ophthalmic assessment and physical examination of the relevant area(s) of treatment and interpret findings</li> <li>• initiates and accurately interprets a wide range of investigations within guidelines and protocols.</li> </ul>

## Specialist competency: ophthalmic day care

Ophthalmic day care		
Competent nurse	Experienced/proficient nurse	Senior practitioner/expert nurse
<p><b>Technical skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates skill in performing visual acuity, biometry, IOL Master keratometry, automated and manual focimetry, tonometry, drop installation, RAPD, venepuncture, and ECG.</li> </ul> <p><b>Communication in day care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates history taking skills to elicit the patient's medical, social and psychology history</li> <li>discusses different methods of teaching and patient education to gain patient's and/or carers understanding of their eye conditions, procedures to be undertaken and aftercare to ensure post operative compliance and eye safety</li> <li>demonstrates telephone pre-operative assessment following guidelines and using appropriate documentation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Management of day surgery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates an understanding of the needs of patients presenting with a range of ophthalmic conditions to the day surgical area, such as cataract, glaucoma, retinal, strabismus, lid disorder</li> <li>able to prepare the patient for a range of pre-operative procedures using holistic care</li> <li>able to care for the patient in the post-operative period to include monitoring, recognition of complications and patient advice and education.</li> </ul> <p><b>Post-operative assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understands the principles of, and is able to work as, a member of the team in the post-operative assessment clinic by performing basic investigations such as visual acuity, auto refraction.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Technical skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to problem solve around the performance of skill in complex situations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Communication in day care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to use communication skills in complex situations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Management of day surgery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to maximise use of integrated care pathways in fast-tracking patients requiring ophthalmic surgery</li> <li>initiates appropriate pre-operative investigations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Post-operative assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to assess patients using history taking skills in the post-operative clinic</li> <li>able to assess the anterior and posterior of the eye using slit lamp</li> <li>able to co-ordinate complex discharge processes</li> <li>able to manage follow up provision e.g. for further surgery, referral or discharge.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Technical skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses expert knowledge and experience to develop ophthalmic day services, using technical skills to full potential.</li> </ul> <p><b>Communication in day care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to lead a multiprofessional team in developing the day care service.</li> </ul> <p><b>Management of day surgery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to work autonomously, managing the whole care episode of the patient having day surgery</li> <li>demonstrates expertise in diagnostic skills, such as advanced biometry and prescription of the IOL lens.</li> </ul>

## Specialist competency: low vision care

Low vision care		
Competent nurse	Experienced/proficient nurse	Senior practitioner/expert nurse
<p><b>Optics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates an understanding of the principles involved in magnification in relation to the needs of a particular patient</li> <li>demonstrates an understanding of concave and convex lens used as low visual aids</li> <li>demonstrates an understanding of how the usage of a different light source can enhance print on a page without the use of magnification and is able to advise the individual patient on suitability and choice</li> <li>identifies how the usage of different colours, textures and contrasts may help the individual visually impaired patient.</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessment of the visually impaired person</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates an ability to assess visual function</li> <li>uses knowledge of abnormal ocular physiology to anticipate effects on the person's vision</li> <li>demonstrates an understanding of how vision is used in daily living skills and other tasks.</li> </ul> <p><b>Equipment: optical, non-optical and high technical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates knowledge of a range of equipment (magnifiers, spectacles, monoculars and high tech equipment such as CCTVs)</li> <li>understands how eccentric fixation, eccentric viewing, steady eye strategy and the use of typoscopes are relevant to the needs of some visually impaired patients</li> <li>demonstrates knowledge of colour, contrast sensitivity, and the use of light for the visually impaired patient</li> <li>demonstrates knowledge of how the environment may affect patients with a visual impairment.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Optics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates an understanding of the different types of lenses (cylinders/spheres)</li> <li>demonstrates an ability to assess patients' existing lens prescription</li> <li>uses a structured approach to identify the magnification needs of the patient</li> <li>consistently demonstrates the use of effective interventions to enable the visually impaired patient to continue with everyday activities</li> <li>consistently demonstrates how the use of a different light source can effectively help the visually impaired person with different tasks.</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessment of the visually impaired person</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>assesses the needs of the visually impaired person in relation to daily living needs</li> <li>uses a full range of strategies to help the visually impaired person obtain the most appropriate and effective care for their needs</li> <li>ensures that health and safety principles are maintained</li> <li>anticipates the daily dilemmas of the visually impaired person and use specialist knowledge to achieve the best outcome.</li> </ul> <p><b>Equipment: optical, non optical and high technical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>actively promotes the use of a range of equipment including optical, non optical and high tech for patients with low vision</li> <li>has a proactive attitude towards patients with low vision</li> <li>uses knowledge of appropriate agencies to obtain information on different equipment for the use of the visually impaired.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Optics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>critically evaluates the use of different types of magnifiers, telescopes, spectacles and non optical equipment for the most effective benefit of the visually impaired patient</li> <li>understands the effect of manipulating refractive correction for patients with low vision.</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessment of the visually impaired person</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>plans and co-ordinates the delivery of an effective patient-centred low vision service</li> <li>consistently demonstrates expertise in the management of the visually impaired patient</li> <li>formally identifies risk and manages risk in the low vision environment.</li> </ul> <p><b>Equipment: optical, non-optical and high technical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>continuously upgrades the range of equipment available in the low vision service</li> <li>evaluates the use of low vision equipment</li> <li>works with other agencies to promote the use of equipment within the low vision service.</li> </ul>

## Specialist competency: emergency care

Emergency care		
Competent nurse	Experienced/proficient nurse	Senior practitioner/expert nurse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates the ability to provide for the immediate care of patients with undifferentiated and undiagnosed ophthalmic conditions or injuries</li> <li>demonstrates an understanding of a range of presenting ophthalmic conditions or injuries in order to undertake an initial triage assessment</li> <li>has the ability to make decisions about priorities of care and prescribes, initiates and monitors interventions under the indirect supervision of an expert ophthalmic emergency nurse</li> <li>to provide for immediate care of patients demonstrates competence in the appropriate technical skills including the following: visual acuity testing, tonometry, RAPD assessment, drop administration, venepuncture, ocular irrigation, sub-conjunctival injection and removal of a sub-tarsal foreign body (this is not a definitive list)</li> <li>by using a range of technical skills to provide for the immediate care of patients more fully, demonstrates the use of good interpersonal and communication techniques to minimise patient anxiety during their time in the ophthalmic emergency department</li> <li>has the ability to organise post-consultation investigations and treatment</li> <li>is able to plan for the provision of care in the community following discharge from emergency care, including patient education for self-care, ocular health promotion and the prevention of further eye injuries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>takes responsibility for leading a team, with the ability to organise, prescribe, initiate and monitor the immediate care of patients with undifferentiated and undiagnosed ophthalmic conditions or injuries</li> <li>demonstrates a range of technical assessment skills including slit lamp examination</li> <li>takes responsibility for initiating the immediate care of patients with undifferentiated and undiagnosed ophthalmic conditions or injuries deciding on priorities of care by using advanced history taking, ocular examination and diagnostic reasoning skills, in conjunction with other members of the multidisciplinary team and within protocols.</li> <li>prescribes, initiates, interprets and monitors diagnostic tests, interventions and treatment regimes independently and without supervision within protocols in the ophthalmic emergency care setting</li> <li>discharges patients with a range of conditions within protocols</li> <li>refers patients to other members of the multidisciplinary team appropriately</li> <li>provides/prescribes medication for patients under protocol or by independent or supplementary prescribing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>independently organises nursing care delivery in the ophthalmic emergency care setting</li> <li>takes responsibility for initiating the immediate care of patients with undifferentiated and undiagnosed ophthalmic conditions or injuries deciding on priorities of care by using advanced history taking, ocular examination and diagnostic reasoning skills</li> <li>takes responsibility for the whole episode of care for some patients with complex problems</li> <li>uses expertise to prescribe, initiate, interpret and monitor diagnostic tests, interventions and treatment regimes independently and without supervision in the ophthalmic emergency care setting</li> <li>uses expertise to co-ordinate, and contribute toward, a multidisciplinary approach to patient care delivery including using expert knowledge to inform the development and delivery of local ophthalmic emergency services</li> <li>develops protocols and guidelines to support the competent and experienced (proficient), nurse in the delivery of patient care in the ophthalmic emergency care setting</li> <li>acts as an expert witness, inside and when necessary, outside the ophthalmic setting.</li> </ul>

## Specialist competency: perioperative care

Perioperative care		
Competent nurse	Experienced/ proficient nurse	Senior practitioner/ expert nurse
<p><b>Being person-centred</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identifies individual mobility and communication needs of the patient undergoing ophthalmic surgery including the special needs of the patient undergoing local anaesthetic with sensory deprivation</li> <li>demonstrates the ability to develop a therapeutic rapport with patients in ophthalmic theatre e.g. anxiety management and including techniques such as handholding.</li> </ul> <p><b>Using evidence-based practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>keeps up-to-date with legal, professional and technical advances in caring for patients undergoing ophthalmic surgery.</li> </ul> <p><b>Anaesthetics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>applies standards for monitoring patients and is confident in caring for a patient in an emergency situation</li> <li>demonstrates an understanding of the Royal Colleges of Ophthalmology and Anaesthetist guidelines relating to ophthalmic anaesthetics</li> <li>understands the specific medical conditions for consideration in patients undergoing local anaesthetic ophthalmic surgery and actions required to manage any potential problems</li> <li>understands the nursing implications for different types and routes of local anaesthetics used during ophthalmic surgery.</li> </ul> <p><b>Positioning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understands the principles of positioning of the patient for ophthalmic surgery and ensures all necessary equipment is available</li> <li>understands the principles of safe patient-moving techniques.</li> </ul> <p><b>Scrub nurse skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>can scrub and maintain a sterile operating field</li> <li>able to set up and use a range of technical ophthalmic equipment</li> <li>effectively handles microsurgical instruments and sharps.</li> </ul> <p><b>Circulating nurse skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>assists scrub nurse with all aspects of care</li> <li>has a good knowledge of the department and where various equipment is stored</li> <li>can effectively use a range of technical equipment e.g. phacoemulsification machine set up and use</li> <li>understands the common ophthalmic surgical procedures.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Being person-centred</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses standards/guidelines to support patient-centred care in managing the theatre environment.</li> </ul> <p><b>Scrub nurse skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates advanced scrub practitioner techniques such as lens holding, tissue handling, and microscope skills</li> <li>able to troubleshoot problems with technical equipment.</li> </ul> <p><b>Circulating nurse skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>contributes to the resolution of any problems with patient care or technical equipment i.e. troubleshooting</li> <li>has an in depth knowledge of most ophthalmic surgical procedures</li> <li>develops advanced theatre practitioner skills e.g. in sub tenon's anaesthesia, minor surgical skills.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Being person-centred</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses patients' views of the operating department experience to plan and improve care in the department.</li> </ul> <p><b>Using evidence-based practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensures policies, protocols and guidelines in use are evidence-based.</li> </ul> <p><b>Scrub nurse skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>supports the development of advanced practice with the provision of continuous professional development strategies</li> <li>uses knowledge and expertise to develop, implement and review integrated care pathways in the theatre environment.</li> </ul>

## Specialist competency: perioperative care

Perioperative care		
Competent nurse	Experienced/proficient nurse	Senior practitioner/expert nurse
<p><b>Managing risks in the environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• safely accepts transfer of patient in and out of theatre</li> <li>• ensures correct eye/correct patient</li> <li>• understands ventilation system in use and action to take if malfunctioning</li> <li>• manages noise level during procedures</li> <li>• confident with the basics of using microscopes</li> <li>• shows knowledge of the principles of laser safety</li> <li>• demonstrates a knowledge of COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health regulations) and radioactive safety requirements</li> <li>• demonstrates a knowledge of common pharmaceutical preparations used in ophthalmic surgery and anaesthetics.</li> </ul> <p><b>Maintaining a sterile surgical field</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has a knowledge of the microbiological basis of infection control and decontamination/sterilisation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Leadership skills</b> (See leadership section)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates effective assertiveness skills to protect the patient and the surgical environment.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Managing risks in the environment</b> (See maintaining safety)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• anticipates problems and contributes to their solution</li> <li>• actively promotes principles of infection control in the multiprofessional team.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Managing risks in the environment</b> (See maintaining safety)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• procures sterile services and monitors with tracking systems.</li> </ul>

## Specialist competency: outpatient practice

Outpatient practice		
Competent nurse	Experienced/proficient nurse	Senior practitioner/expert nurse
<p><b>Technical skills in the outpatient department</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates skill in performing visual acuity, near vision tests, Amsler Chart Assessment, colour vision testing, RAPD assessment, drop instillation (this is not an exhaustive list)</li> <li>demonstrates timely preparation of the patient and the environment to enable the skills to be undertaken</li> <li>ensures that the health and safety, and the need for privacy and dignity of the patient are met.</li> </ul> <p><b>Legal issues in the outpatient department</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates an understanding of the importance of the use of patient group directives, patient specific directions and the law relating to ophthalmic medications in relation to preparing patients for examination.</li> </ul> <p><b>Communication in the outpatient department</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates history-taking skills to elicit the patient's ophthalmic, medical and psychosocial history</li> <li>demonstrates effective communication skills to enable patients to understand and consent to any examinations or interventions that may be required</li> <li>demonstrates the use of different methods of information giving to assist patient /carers an understanding of their eye condition.</li> </ul> <p><b>Management in the outpatient department</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates an understanding of the setting up and management of general and specialist ophthalmic clinics</li> <li>able to prepare patients for a range of ophthalmic examinations and interventions utilising holistic principles</li> <li>able to monitor patients and recognise complications following specialist investigations or treatment.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Technical skills in the outpatient department</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to assess the anterior and posterior segments of the eye using slit lamp</li> <li>able to assess intra-ocular pressure using a range of techniques</li> <li>able to maintain equipment and troubleshoot appropriately.</li> </ul> <p><b>Communication in the outpatient department</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to use highly developed communication skills in complex situations with both ophthalmic patients, and carers and internal and external personnel</li> <li>uses complex strategies to deal with communication issues such as breaking bad news</li> <li>able to direct patients and carers to appropriate agencies and information sources</li> <li>able to access patient support services rapidly and appropriately use tools such as registration.</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessment in the outpatient department</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to problem solve around the performance of techniques and skill in complex situations</li> <li>able to assess patients using history taking skills in the outpatient clinic.</li> </ul> <p><b>Management of the outpatient department</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to maximise use of care pathways for patients undergoing specialist investigations and treatments</li> <li>able to prioritise patients needing specialist investigations and treatments via fast tracking</li> <li>initiates appropriate investigations/treatments</li> <li>able to work autonomously, managing the outpatient episode of consultation, investigation and treatment within protocols.</li> </ul> <p><b>Post-operative assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to assess patients using history-taking skills in the post-operative clinic</li> <li>able to assess the anterior and posterior of the eye using slit lamp</li> <li>able to co-ordinate complex discharge</li> <li>able to manage follow up provision e.g. for further surgery, referral or discharge.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Technical skills in the outpatient department</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to develop outpatient services, using technical skills to full potential and facilitating others</li> <li>able to work autonomously, managing the outpatient episode of consultation, investigation and treatment.</li> <li>demonstrates expertise in diagnostic skills both technically and through theoretical and advanced practice experience.</li> </ul> <p><b>Communication in the outpatient department</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>leads a multidisciplinary team in developing the range of services available to improve patient access.</li> </ul>

## Specialist competency: inpatient practice

Inpatient practice		
Competent nurse	Experienced/proficient nurse	Senior practitioner/expert nurse
<p><b>Under the supervision of an expert nurse</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understands and can work with a varied client group, with a variety of complex needs</li> <li>can work efficiently with a busy and rapidly changing workload</li> <li>assesses and plans the specialist ophthalmic nursing care for patients with simple or complex needs of patients undergoing routine ophthalmic surgery</li> <li>assesses and plans the specialist ophthalmic nursing care for patients with simple or complex acute ocular conditions</li> <li>assesses and plans the specialist ophthalmic nursing care for patients with simple or complex needs of patients with a chronic ocular condition</li> <li>undertakes simple and complex investigations to assist diagnosis or determine the health status of the patient</li> <li>makes appropriate decisions in seeking further help or support in relation to findings</li> <li>implements standard care plans and modify or develop new plans in response to nursing assessment</li> <li>uses specialist evidence-based knowledge to educate the patient about their condition, treatment or pending surgery</li> <li>supports patients with low vision with developing/regaining independence</li> <li>supports more junior staff in the implementation of specialist care for the ophthalmic patient</li> <li>positions patients appropriately to maintain/retain ocular health</li> <li>understands and implements safe moving and handling procedures</li> <li>liaises with statutory and voluntary agencies to prepare the patient for discharge</li> <li>understands complex topical and oral treatment regimens</li> <li>uses patient group directives (PGDs) to expedite care plans</li> <li>evaluates specific, specialist care plans</li> <li>uses skill to systematically telephone triage and seeks appropriate advice</li> <li>triages ocular emergencies (out-of-hours) and records and reports findings appropriately.</li> </ul>	<p><b>With minimum guidance and supervision from the expert nurse</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>co-ordinates the activities of staff during a shift</li> <li>provides more in-depth knowledge and skill to the care of patients with acute and chronic ocular conditions</li> <li>teaches and supervises staff and patients</li> <li>utilises specialist knowledge to recognise and report deviations from expected progress of the acute or chronically ill patient</li> <li>utilises specialist knowledge to recognise and report deviations from expected progress of the pre and post-operative patient</li> <li>draws on specialist knowledge and skill to instigate emergency treatments as appropriate.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Working autonomously</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explores/researches the rationale/evidence base for specific ophthalmic care interventions</li> <li>actively seeks to develop a sound evidence base for care in practice</li> <li>prioritises care needs in response to changes</li> <li>monitors and evaluates policies and protocols</li> <li>supports the development of a learning environment for staff and patients</li> <li>actively supports the development of advanced practice.</li> </ul>

## Specialist competency: care of children and young people

Care of children and young people		
Competent nurse	Experienced/proficient nurse	Senior practitioner/expert nurse
<p><b>Selecting and using a specific knowledge base (this relates particularly to eyesight development and its potential effects on children's behaviour and cognitive abilities)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates knowledge of the value of effective communication with children</li> <li>demonstrates knowledge of the value of effective communication with parents and siblings</li> <li>demonstrates knowledge of the value of play in communicating with children</li> <li>demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the normal stages of child development</li> <li>develops knowledge of the possible psychological effects of an eye condition on a child</li> <li>uses this knowledge to identify possible psychological consequences for individual children</li> <li>analyses the possible effects of the child's eye condition on family and friends</li> <li>demonstrates knowledge of the psychological effects of hospitalisation on children and their families</li> <li>understands the psychological and physical consequences for the child of parental separation</li> <li>demonstrates knowledge of the importance of maintaining a safe and suitable environment for children</li> <li>demonstrates knowledge of particular risks faced by children with impaired vision</li> <li>demonstrates knowledge of the department's risk assessment procedures</li> <li>uses knowledge to identify, ameliorate and report actual and potential risks to children</li> <li>understands the mechanisms that result in different physiological responses by children to illness/trauma, sedation, anaesthesia</li> <li>understands the importance of vital signs that need to be measured to assess children accurately</li> <li>demonstrates knowledge of the specific care for children who are undergoing pre and post-operative ophthalmic surgery.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Selecting and using a specific knowledge base</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consistently demonstrates techniques of effective communication with children along the developmental continuum, with a variety of health needs</li> <li>uses social theories to understand ways in which modern families are constituted, and uses this knowledge to establish effective two-way communications</li> <li>uses baseline knowledge to recognise and report deviations in expected child ophthalmic and visual development</li> <li>understands the possible consequences of delayed development</li> <li>uses knowledge to identify possible causative factors</li> <li>draws on specific children's nursing theories to develop good relationships with children and families</li> <li>uses nursing knowledge to foster the development of specific coping strategies in terms of serious eye conditions for children families, uses knowledge of attachment and separation theories to work with child and family to minimise the detrimental effects of the hospital environment on the child's wellbeing</li> <li>children's friends</li> <li>knows the rights of minors who have reached the age of 16 to consent to and refuse to take part in research trials</li> <li>know the principles of parallel consent minors by who have reached the age of 16 and their parents</li> <li>knows the rights of the person who does not have parental responsibility for a child, but does have the care of the child</li> <li>understands the principles of competence to consent</li> <li>able to take an overview of the needs of a group of children and parents while at the same time dealing with a sick child in an emergency situation</li> <li>demonstrates and teaches from a basis of wide knowledge and experience how to manage children who are under physiological stress</li> <li>ensures the availability and use of correct monitoring equipment for children.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Selecting and using a specific knowledge base</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses knowledge to communicate effectively with children and families in challenging situations. This should include single family units, small groups and the wider public</li> <li>uses methods of communication to include body language, spoken and written communications</li> <li>works with families, groups of families and other agencies to ensure that children's maximum individual potential development is reached</li> <li>identifies the range of factors that contribute to children's psychological wellbeing</li> <li>plans and provides services accordingly</li> <li>audits children's services</li> <li>uses theoretical knowledge and professional experience to plan the environment actively and adapts systems to meet the needs of children and families</li> <li>able to offer advice and knowledge to nursing and medical staff emanating from personal practical experience on issues relating to consent, including clash of views involving consent between parent and child, and the circumstances under which a child can give valid consent</li> <li>uses range of knowledge to plan for and manage the paediatric environment and staff in terms of health and safety.</li> </ul>

## Specialist competency: care of children and young people

Care of children and young people		
Competent nurse	Experienced/proficient nurse	Senior practitioner/expert nurse
<p><b>Selecting and using a specific knowledge base</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understands the causes of ophthalmic pain</li> <li>recognises if a child is in pain, particularly in relation to their eye condition</li> <li>assesses the child using recognised paediatric pain assessment tools appropriately</li> <li>provides appropriate paediatric pain medication promptly</li> <li>demonstrates awareness of common childhood illnesses, allergies, food sensitivities, and immunisation</li> <li>demonstrates knowledge of common drugs and eyedrops used for children, effects and side-effects and safe administration</li> <li>aware of the potentially serious systemic effects of some eyedrops in people with low body weight</li> <li>understands the principles of achieving child and parent co-operation for ophthalmic treatments</li> <li>understands issues around restraint of children in an ophthalmic setting</li> <li>demonstrates knowledge of common eye conditions in childhood to include: allergies, conjunctivitis, viral infections, ptosis, squint, orbital cellulites, ophthalmia neonatorum, buphthalmos, chalazion, stye, naso-lacrimal duct obstruction, and trauma such as hyphaema, abrasions, lid lacerations a (this is not a definitive list)</li> <li>understands the importance of effective preparation of the child and family prior to hospital admission.</li> </ul> <p><b>Using specific nursing interventions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>supports continuing contacts with school</li> <li>demonstrates the measurement and documentation of height, weight and baseline observations in children</li> <li>begins to interpret the significance of the measurements.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Selecting and using a specific knowledge base</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>assesses the child's pain and use specific strategies to relieve ophthalmic pain</li> <li>involves the child and parents in pain management strategies</li> <li>knows about a wide range of paediatric analgesics and dosages appropriate to the management of ophthalmic pain</li> <li>recognises common childhood illnesses and act appropriately in managing the child</li> <li>recognises and advises on children's nutritional requirements</li> <li>relates knowledge of specific ophthalmic drugs to the treatment of specific conditions in children</li> <li>understands basic pathophysiology in relation to these drugs</li> <li>demonstrates the ability to achieve co-operation from child and parent in most circumstances</li> <li>recognises the need for restraint and be able to demonstrate correct procedures and useful techniques</li> <li>applies knowledge of eye conditions to plan, implement and evaluate care</li> <li>educates child and parents about the eye condition and how to manage it</li> <li>encourages child and parents to adopt a lifestyle that will reduce the risk of eye injury and disease.</li> </ul> <p><b>Using specific nursing interventions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates the ability to apply patches consistently to children and parents who have experienced difficulty in complying</li> <li>demonstrates use of play and distraction methods to promote patch compliance</li> <li>demonstrates improved visual outcomes in the unpatched eye</li> <li>teaches child and parent techniques to improve compliance with patching</li> <li>continues contact with parents to assess progress, and provides encouragement and advise on any difficulties.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Selecting and using a specific knowledge base</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>holds a current Paediatric Advanced Life Support certificate</li> <li>regularly reviews contents and equipment in paediatric resuscitation trolley in conjunction with resuscitation officer</li> <li>researches, develops and promotes the use of new ophthalmic pain management strategies</li> <li>aware of pharmacological developments in paediatric pain management</li> <li>draws on a wide range of ophthalmic experience and advises on the use of drugs, particularly eyedrops, in children</li> <li>advises on restraint of children in relation to policy and procedures</li> <li>synthesises previous ophthalmic knowledge to apply in unexpected/unknown situations</li> <li>devises new approaches to children's orthoptic needs</li> <li>promotes interprofessional working to use available staff resources effectively</li> <li>plans possible changes in budgetary restrictions</li> <li>uses a wide range of ophthalmic experience, and advises on unusual or unexpected paediatric ophthalmic findings</li> <li>acts in advisory capacity in usual situations</li> <li>advises in unfamiliar or unexpected situations e.g. unusual surgery or trauma.</li> </ul>

## Specialist competency: care of children and young people

Care of children and young people		
Competent nurse	Experienced/proficient nurse	Senior practitioner/ expert nurse
<p><b>Using specific nursing interventions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recognises the need to act quickly when presented with a sick child and take appropriate action</li> <li>knows principles and techniques of patching in non-complicated children</li> <li>able to carry out a basic pen torch eye examination of a child</li> <li>observes any ophthalmic abnormalities</li> <li>documents examination</li> <li>measures and records visual acuity in children using appropriate equipment</li> <li>demonstrates effective eye cleaning technique for children who may be injured or frightened</li> <li>demonstrates safe instillation of eyedrops having obtained child's co-operation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>accurately records a child's visual acuity in all situations i.e. eye injury or psychological factors</li> <li>teaches parents safe and pain free techniques</li> <li>acts as a specialist resource for school and children's support services</li> <li>works autonomously, managing the episodes of care including consultation, investigation and treatment within protocols.</li> </ul>	

## Specialist competency: primary care practice

Primary care practice		
Competent nurse	Experienced/proficient nurse	Senior practitioner/expert nurse
<p><b>Service provision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates understanding of referral/communication routes and pathways between primary and secondary ophthalmic care providers that underpin patient care delivery</li> <li>demonstrates understanding of the roles and responsibilities of primary ophthalmic care providers (NHS Direct, optometric services, social services, GP) and the type and level of services provided by these systems</li> <li>recognises the need for collaboration between primary care and secondary ophthalmic service providers to ensure delivery of effective care to ophthalmic patients</li> <li>demonstrates an awareness of the impact of government agendas in underpinning provision of ophthalmic services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NHS Plan</li> <li>Choice Agenda</li> <li>Action on Cataracts</li> <li>referral pathways for AMD, cataract, glaucoma, low vision.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Documentation/record keeping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to document referral details and information in a way that is clearly understood by all primary and secondary ophthalmic care providers</li> <li>demonstrates understanding of referral documentation and plans patient care interventions accordingly.</li> </ul> <p><b>Patient information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identifies and uses patient preferences to provide patient information in at least one format suited to the patient's individual needs</li> <li>demonstrates the ability to communicate effectively with patient/carers to give them an understanding of the eye condition</li> <li>able to identify a range of publicly funded resources to support patient information needs such as IGA, Macula Disease Society, RNIB, TEDS.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Service provision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates the ability access/use referral/communication routes and pathways between primary and secondary ophthalmic care providers that underpin patient care delivery</li> <li>demonstrates the ability to discuss a range of care provision modalities (NHS Direct, optometric services, social services, GP) with patients and offer appropriate advice to enable them to access these services</li> <li>accepts and generates referrals between primary care and secondary ophthalmic service providers</li> <li>takes government agendas in underpinning provision of ophthalmic services into account when planning ophthalmic nursing interventions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Documentation/record keeping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to document referral details and information in a way that is clearly understood by all primary and secondary ophthalmic care providers</li> <li>evaluates the nature and quality of patient referrals and plans patient care interventions accordingly.</li> </ul> <p><b>Patient information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provides patient information in a range of formats and supports the patient in identifying the effectiveness of the information to meet their own individual needs</li> <li>evaluates patients/carers understanding of the eye condition and communicates effectively with patients/carers to correct misunderstanding and give further information as and when required</li> <li>able to access information from a range of publicly funded resources such as IGA, Macula Disease Society, RNIB, TEDS, and is able to use this information to support the patient to meet their individual needs.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Service provision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>collaborates with primary and secondary ophthalmic care providers to develop and use referral/communication routes and pathways to underpin patient access and care delivery</li> <li>works in the multidisciplinary team to plan and co-ordinate future levels of service delivery, codes of practice, capacity, demand and cost-effectiveness of service provision supporting ophthalmic service delivery</li> <li>participates in audit and referrals between primary and secondary ophthalmic services and future service development</li> <li>participates in the local implementation of government agendas in provision of ophthalmic services.</li> </ul> <p><b>Documentation/record keeping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>participates in the development of referral documentation</li> <li>works in the multidisciplinary team to ensure that patient referrals meet standards in relation to quality and effectiveness.</li> </ul> <p><b>Patient information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>participates in the development, audit and evaluation of patient information resources</li> <li>communicates effectively with the multidisciplinary team and other stakeholders involved in ophthalmic service delivery to ensure parity and clarity of patient information provision</li> <li>creates and uses links with a range of publicly funded resources such as IGA, Macula Disease Society, RNIB, TEDS, to enhance and support care delivery.</li> </ul>

## Specialist competency: primary care practice

Primary care practice		
Competent nurse	Experienced/proficient nurse	Senior practitioner/expert nurse
<p><b>Care provision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates effective communication skills in eliciting the patient's ophthalmic, medical and psychosocial history</li> <li>demonstrates the ability to utilise information gained through ophthalmic examination/assessment to make decisions about the management of the patient care episode</li> <li>demonstrates effective communication skills to enable patients to understand and consent to examination or therapeutic interventions</li> <li>recognises patient/carers needs in relation to the communication of bad news and uses a range of interventions to support the patient/carer with supervision as required.</li> </ul> <p><b>Technical skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates competent performance in undertaking a range of core ophthalmic examinations and assessments               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>assessment of visual function - visual acuity, near vision, Amsler grid, colour vision, visual field</li> <li>relative afferent pupillary defect</li> <li>ocular examination with slit lamp or pen torch</li> <li>intra ocular pressure</li> <li>focimetry</li> <li>lacrimal syringing.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>(This is not an exhaustive list and it is expected that the level and type of core ophthalmic skills undertaken will be defined according to local policy.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates the ability to initiate appropriate tests treatments for patients with routine presentation of conditions</li> <li>demonstrates timely preparation of the patient and the environment to enable the patient examination/assessment</li> <li>ensures that the health and safety, and the need for privacy and dignity of the patient are met</li> <li>demonstrates an understanding of patient group directives, patient specific directions and the law relating to ophthalmic medications in relation to preparing patients for examination</li> <li>monitors patients and recognise complications following specialist investigations or treatment</li> <li>recognises the need for further patient support such as notification of readiness for admission to the Blind and Partially Sighted Register.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Care provision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evaluates the salient aspects of the patient's ophthalmic, medical and psychosocial history and presentation to formulate diagnoses and care plans within agreed protocols/guidelines</li> <li>demonstrates the ability to solve problems and make decisions about the patient care episode based on information gained through ophthalmic examination/assessment and with reference to previous practice experience</li> <li>demonstrates the use of highly developed communication skills to manage complex situations with both ophthalmic patients, and carers and the multidisciplinary team</li> <li>able to use complex strategies to deal with communication issues such as breaking bad news.</li> </ul> <p><b>Technical skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates a fluid, highly proficient performance in undertaking a range of core ophthalmic examinations and assessments</li> <li>demonstrates highly proficient performance in undertaking expanded ophthalmic skills such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fundoscopy</li> <li>evaluation of dry eye</li> <li>management of glaucoma</li> <li>management of cataract.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>(This is not an exhaustive list and it is expected that the level and type of expanded ophthalmic skills undertaken will be defined according to local policy.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates the ability to evaluate information gained through ophthalmic examination and assessment in relation to normal and abnormal patient presentations to prioritise patients needing specialist investigations and treatments</li> <li>manages follow up provision e.g. for further surgery, referral or discharge within agreed pathways and protocols</li> <li>able to administer medications under patient group directives, patient specific directions for examination and treatment</li> <li>able to access patient support services rapidly and appropriately using tools such as Notification of Visual Impairment.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Care provision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>works independently to manage the patient episode of consultation, investigation and treatment through the application of theoretical and advanced practice experience and technical expertise</li> <li>develops protocols and guidelines to support the competent and experienced (proficient), nurse in the delivery of patient care in the ophthalmic primary care setting</li> <li>demonstrates the ability to communicate within and across professional boundaries to co-ordinate, and contribute towards, a multidisciplinary approach to patient care delivery.</li> </ul> <p><b>Technical skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to develop the full potential of ophthalmic primary care services through the use of highly specialist technical skills and expertise</li> <li>facilitates others in the acquisition and development of highly specialist technical skills and expertise</li> <li>manages follow up provision independently referring for surgery, further assessment, follow-up and co-ordinating complex discharges</li> <li>able to prescribe and administer patient medication.</li> </ul>

## Specialist competency: primary care practice

Primary care practice		
Competent nurse	Experienced/proficient nurse	Senior practitioner/expert nurse
<p><b>Clinic management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to manage the day-to-day activity of primary care clinics with support and supervision</li> <li>able to maintain equipment and troubleshoot problems and malfunctions appropriately</li> <li>aware of mechanisms for identification and reporting of critical incidents/complaints</li> <li>adheres to identified risk assessments and COSHH in relation to clinic management</li> <li>keeps patients, relatives/carers and visitors of delays in the primary care clinic which may affect waiting time to see the doctor/nurse</li> <li>ensures that communication in the primary care clinic is effective and enhances the quality of patient care, the patient experience and consultation process.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Clinic management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensures appropriate deployment of staff by ensuring appropriate skill mix, provision of training and education to enable staff to work in the primary care clinic</li> <li>responsible for the ordering of equipment and the repair or replacement of malfunctioning equipment</li> <li>initiates the reporting of critical incidents and supports staff in managing critical incidents/complaints</li> <li>undertakes risk assessments and ensures COSHH and risk assessments are up to date and that all staff are familiar with the identified risks and their control</li> <li>intervenes to manage clinic activity to maintain patient flow through the primary care clinic</li> <li>communicates effectively with all members of the multidisciplinary team using a wide range of strategies and resources to promote quality of patient care, the patient experience and consultation process.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Clinic management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identifies minimum staffing levels and initiates and develops training/education programmes for staff working in the primary care setting</li> <li>takes part in commissioning new equipment and identifying new services and practice developments</li> <li>investigates critical incidents/complaints and offers expert advice and opinion to internal and external peer group</li> <li>audits risk assessment practice and evaluates the effectiveness of quality assurance activities in relation to service provision</li> <li>identifies service level agreements and ensures continued service delivery through recruitment activities, succession planning and staff development</li> <li>communicates effectively with all members of the multidisciplinary team both within and external to the primary care clinic ensuring that communication pathways are robust, feasible and promote quality of patient care, the patient experience and consultation process.</li> </ul>

## 5

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