

# Advanced Vascular Nurse Competencies

The Society of Vascular Nurses (SVN) *Advanced Vascular Nurse Competencies* have been developed in response to changes within vascular services, the increasing requirements for vascular nurses to provide evidence of competency of their advanced skills and to define the value of nursing practices. These competencies are built upon the Royal College of Nursing definition of 'nursing' which is *the use of clinical judgement in the provision of care to enable people to improve, maintain, or recover health, to cope with health problems, and to achieve the best possible quality of life, whatever their disease or disability, until death*, (RCN, 2003). This document will offer a framework to standardise clinical competencies and provide a structure of education for more junior nursing colleagues.

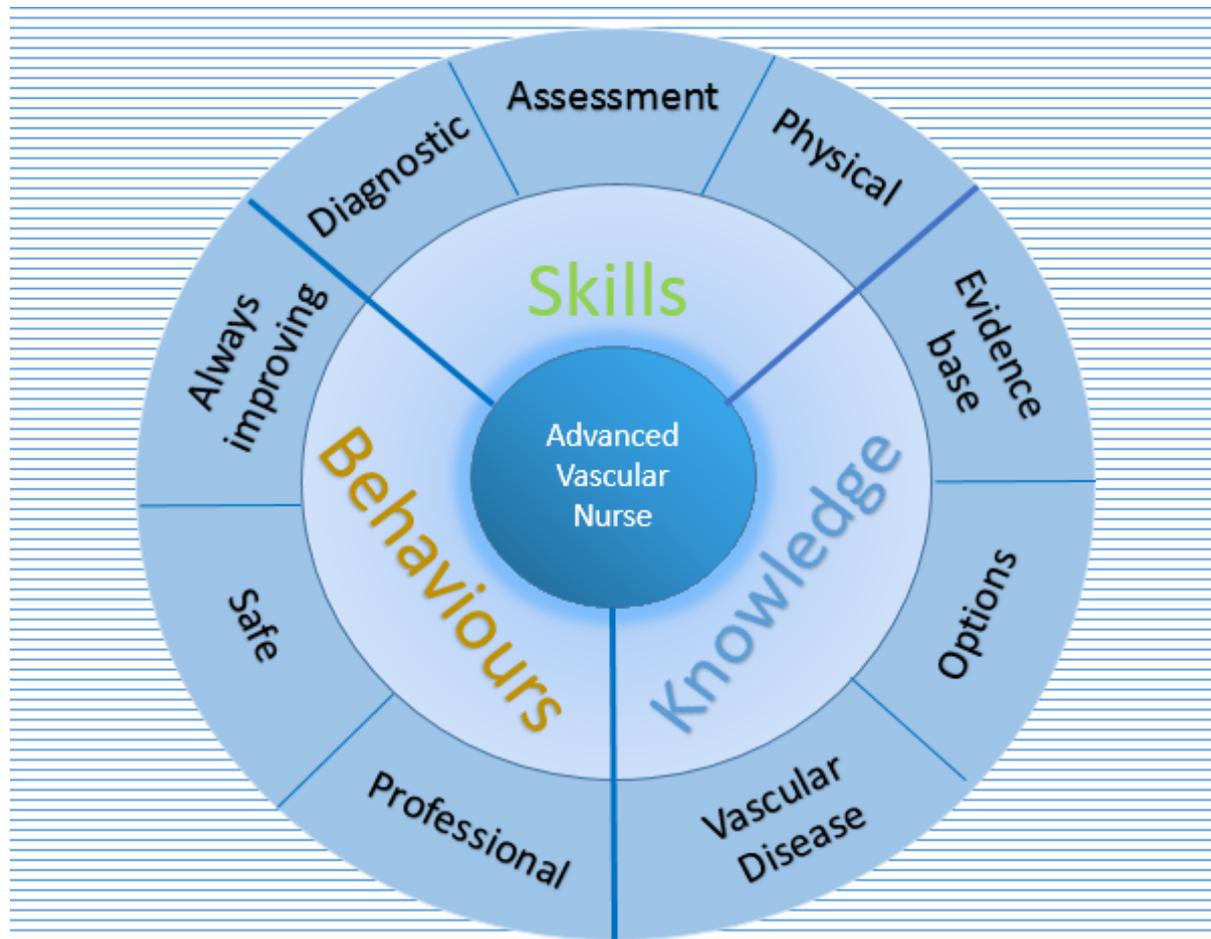
Vascular nursing is extremely varied and it is to be stated that not all aspects of the competencies will be related to every nurses area of practice. All professionals delivering patient care must also be aware of local and national policies relating to effective communication, personal development, equality, diversity and inclusion, duty of care, safeguarding, professional conduct, person centred approach, confidentiality, information governance, infection prevention and control, health and safety and moving and handling.

These competencies set out the minimum standard required to deliver advanced nurse roles in the vascular field. They bring together the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to be effective in the role. Additionally they can be used to identify training requirements.

## Disclaimer

This publication contains information, advice and guidance to help members of the SVN for use within the UK. The information in this booklet has been compiled from professional sources but its accuracy is not guaranteed. While every effort has been made to ensure the SVN provide accurate and expert information and guidance, it is impossible to predict all the circumstances in practice.

## Advanced Vascular Nurse Competencies



### Knowledge

*Has up to date clinical knowledge relating to vascular disease, treatment options and evidence base.*

1. Understands the presentation of vascular diseases, their natural progress and how to assess their severity.
2. Has a sound knowledge of the anatomy and physiology of vascular disease and the impact of disease progression.
3. Recognises the signs and symptoms of arterial disease presentations including claudication, arterial rest pain, acute limb ischaemia and chronic limb ischaemia.
4. Recognises the signs and symptoms of venous disease presentations including varicose veins, venous thrombosis, venous hypertension, venous ulceration and venous malformation.
5. Recognises the signs and symptoms of lower limb presentations including cellulitis, skin

changes, acute oedema, chronic oedema, Neuropathic/Neuroischaemic diabetic foot ulceration and lower leg ulceration.
6. Recognises the signs and symptoms of other vascular conditions including vaso-spastic diseases, aneurysmal disease and carotid disease.
7. Is fully aware of investigation pathways, treatment pathways and referral guidelines of all the above disease presentations.
8. Fully understands the impact of other concurrent diseases (such as haematology, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis) on treatment options and management plans.
9. Familiar with vascular related national policy and guidelines including NICE guidelines, SIGN guidelines, and Vascular Society quality standards.
10. Familiar with and RCN guidelines for Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANP) and NHS ANP guidelines, which will differ dependent on which country within the UK you practice.
11. Has advanced nursing knowledge which is embedded into nursing practices.
12. Understands different non pharmacological and pharmacological approaches to modifying disease and promoting health.
13. Understands the mode of action and pharmacokinetics of any medicines which are prescribed or recommended including how medication needs to be altered by associated conditions such as renal impairment.
14. High level expert knowledge, skills and practice of wound assessment and wound management.
15. Understands the mode of action and potential negative impact of medication in terms of delaying wound healing e.g Methotrexate, Nicorandil and Hydroxyurea.
16. Understands evidence base for current practices – ensuring that knowledge is up to date.
17. Is able to critically appraise and synthesise relevant research, evaluations and audits and apply the information in the clinical setting.
18. Applies the principles of evidence based practice including clinical and cost effectiveness of treatments and benefits.
19. Knowledge of how to assess and report deterioration in condition.
20. Understands the greater public health issues.
21. Evidence of Masters level education.

#### Additional Skills of Senior Advanced Nurse Practitioners, Leaders of Service, Consultant Vascular Nurses

1. Masters Degree.
2. Completed Masters level module in Advanced Nursing Practice/Advanced Clinical Assessment.
3. Working towards PhD.

## Skills

*Able to accurately assess patients, formulate differential diagnosis, able to review patients, generate a management options for the patient using appropriate assessment and physical skills.*

1. Practise autonomously and are self-directed.
2. Takes an appropriate medical history including presenting complaints, past medical history and medication history.
3. Undertakes appropriate clinical assessment using relevant equipment and techniques. Receiving patients with undifferentiated and undiagnosed problems and making an assessment of their health care needs, based on highly-developed nursing knowledge and skills, including skills not usually exercised by nurses, such as physical examination.
4. Accesses and interprets relevant patient records to ensure knowledge of the patient's management.
5. Formulates differential diagnosis.
6. Requests and interprets relevant investigations.
7. Has established processes for clinical governance/audit in relation to requesting and interpreting investigations.
8. Understands and finalises working diagnosis by considering and systematically deciding between the various possibilities (differential diagnosis).
9. Uses relevant patient record systems and decision support tools.
10. Considers all treatment options including no treatment, non-pharmacological interventions, medicines and revascularisation options.
11. Independently able to prescribe medications within knowledge base.
12. Assess the effect of multiple pathologies, existing medications and contraindications of management.
13. Assess the risk to and benefit of patients undergoing investigations and/or interventions.
14. Establishes and maintains a plan for reviewing patients and assessing benefit of intervention.
15. Makes changes to management plan in light of on-going monitoring and the patient's condition and preferences.
16. Assesses the patient's understanding and reinforce the benefits of good health care promotion to prevent complications; including the provision of lifestyle advice (i.e. smoking cessation, taking exercise, healthy diet).
17. Promotes wellbeing in line with the purpose of nursing: to minimise distress and suffering, to enable people to understand and cope with their disease or disability, its treatment and its consequences.
18. Draws upon an appropriate range of multi-agency and inter professional resources to optimise patient care.
19. Competent with the use of hand held Doppler including how to obtain and interpret Ankle Brachial Pressure Index measurement.
20. Providing treatment and care both individually, as part of a team, and through referral to other agencies
21. Screens patients for disease risk factors and early signs of illness, and commences appropriate interventions.
22. Adapts consultation to meet needs of different patients (for example for language, age, capacity, and physical or sensory impairments).
23. Works across professional, organisational and system boundaries and proactively develops and sustains partnership and network relations to influence and improve health outcomes and healthcare delivery systems.
24. Holds highly proficient skills in relation to wound management which may include

compression bandaging, topical negative pressure, blade debridement and other advanced wound management products/devices.

25. Is involved in and facilitates research/audit projects.

#### Additional Skills of Senior Advanced Nurse Practitioners, Leaders of Service, Consultant Vascular Nurses

1. Contributes to the development of evidence-based, clinical and cost-effective vascular care, and takes a leading role in disseminating this information to colleagues.
2. Takes a leading role in the development of vascular -related national guidance and NHS frameworks.
3. Provides consultancy services to their own and other professions on therapeutic interventions, practice and service development.
4. Engages with stakeholders and uses high level negotiation and influencing skills to develop and improve practice.
5. Designs and leads audit/evaluations/research projects.
6. Acts as Clinical Investigator or Principle Investigator on research projects.

## Behaviours

*Displays a professional nature which ensures practices are safe and reviews processes and outcomes to improve service delivery*

1. Communicates clearly and effectively to patients, family and carers using appropriate terminology, while recognising that the patient may require counselling skills to help deal with diagnosis.
2. Ensures that patients (wherever possible) understands treatment plans.
3. Communicates clearly to other individuals who are involved in the management of the patient or members of the multidisciplinary team.
4. Recognises the limits of own knowledge and skills and refers onto senior members of team as necessary.
5. Applies information to clinical context within agreed boundaries and protocols.
6. Seeks out and develops their own professional networks for support, reflection and learning.
7. Communicates clearly with the patient about vascular disease and its associated complications.
8. Proactively identifies the need for clinical and service innovations to meet the needs of people with vascular disease, and takes a leading role in designing and implementing these innovations.
9. Has the authority to admit or discharge patients from their caseload, and refer patients to other healthcare providers as appropriate.
10. Establishes multi-professional links with clinicians in their speciality.
11. Has established clinical governance arrangements in place.
12. Contributes to health improvement by working with relevant local agencies (e.g. social services, patient support networks).
13. Is able to and undertakes regular critical reflection of own practices to highlight learning needs and improve own practice.
14. Identifies and respects the patients' values, beliefs and expectations.
15. Undertakes all patient contact in appropriate settings taking into account confidentiality, dignity and respect.
16. Deals sensitively with patients' emotions and concerns.
17. Creates therapeutic caring relationships with patients.
18. Works with the patient to make informed choices about their treatment and respects their right to refuse or limit treatment.
19. Takes responsibility for own learning and continued professional development.
20. Uses professional judgement in managing complex and unpredictable care events and captures the learning from this to improve patient care and service delivery.
21. Understands the principles and needs for teaching and learning and creates a learning environment.
22. Acts as a teacher, mentor and assessor.
23. Delivers formal education to peers and other members of the multi-disciplinary team.
24. Links with University/Colleges to provide educational sessions.
25. Continuously focuses on the whole person and the human response rather than the condition/disease.
26. Appropriately defines the boundaries of own practice.

### Additional behaviours of Senior Advanced Nurse Practitioners, Leaders of Service, Consultant Vascular Nurses

1. Influences national policy on vascular care.
2. Provides expert advice to influence national policy and agendas.
3. Plays a key role in associated affiliations to vascular nursing to shape the future of vascular nursing and the provision of services to patients.
4. Identifies and implements systems to promote contribution and elevate impact of advanced level nursing to the healthcare team and the wider health and social care sector.
5. Works with higher education institutions and workforce development confederation to influence the development of pre and post registration curriculum for all health professionals in relation to Vascular Speciality.
6. Identifies the need for change, proactively generating practice innovation and leading new ideas and service redesign to better meet the needs of the patients and the service.
7. Shares new knowledge through conference presentations.
8. Publishes new knowledge in the field of vascular nursing in peer reviewed journals.
9. Teaches multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary groups within the Trust and within higher education institutes on a range of subjects relating to vascular disease.

### References

RCN (2003) Royal College Nursing: Defining Nursing, London. Available at: [http://www.rcn.org.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/78564/001983.pdf](http://www.rcn.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/78564/001983.pdf) Accessed 18/1/14