

# Transforming Roles: the Clinical Nurse Specialist and Nurse Practitioner

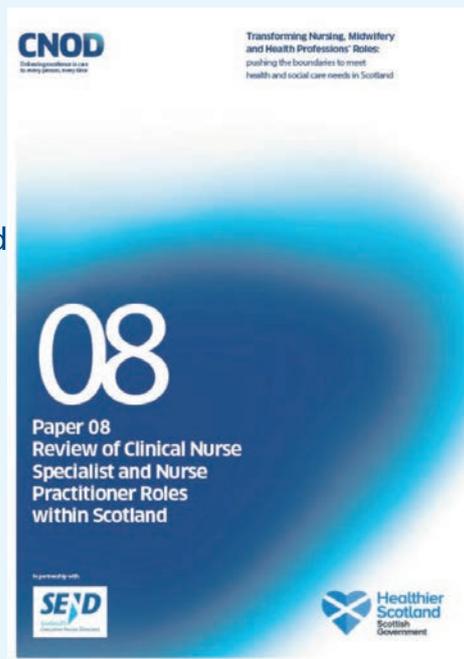
On the 5th August 2021, the Scottish Government published the 8th paper on Transforming Roles (TR). This paper focuses on the Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) and Nurse Practitioner (NP) roles.

The well received, TR paper 2 published in 2017 brought greater clarity to the Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP) role, with a clear definition, competencies, and recommendations for governance and education.

An integral part of the health and social care workforce, CNSs and NPs deliver services and support people and families who require specialist care across both hospital and community settings.

The paper recognises that CNSs can practice at different levels, but primarily at levels 6 (Senior Practitioner) and 7 (Advanced Practitioner) on the NMaHP Development Framework.

Paper 8 provides clear definitions, competencies and recommendations for both governance and education for the CNS and NP roles.

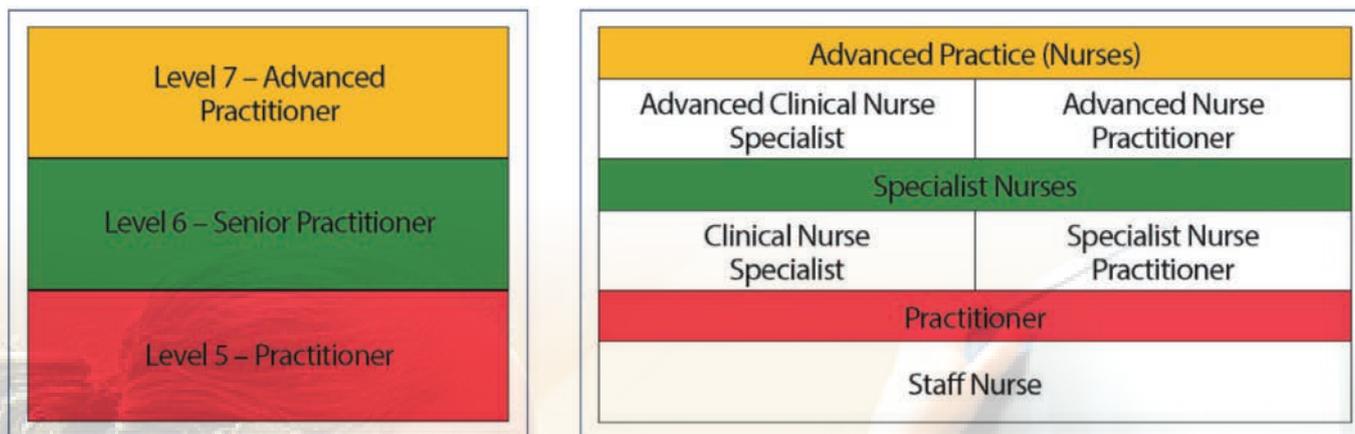


**Download Transforming Roles paper 08 here: [Transforming Nursing, Midwifery And Health Profession \(NMaHP\) roles: review of Clinical Nurse Specialist and Nurse Practitioner roles within Scotland - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/transforming-roles/paper-08-review-of-clinical-nurse-specialist-and-nurse-practitioner-roles-within-scotland/pages/12.aspx)**



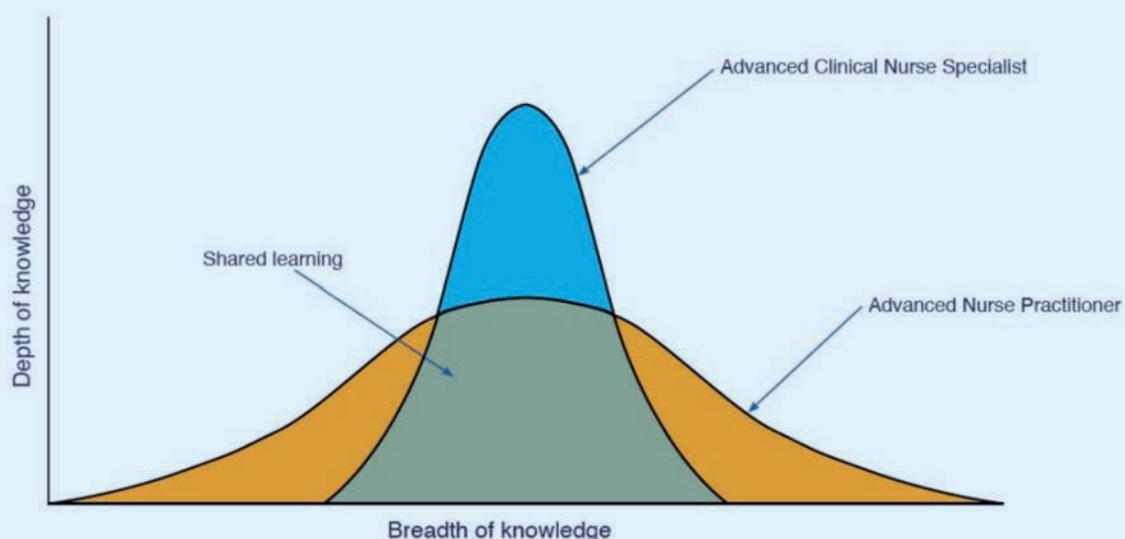
To differentiate the advanced level of practice it's suggested the prefix 'Advanced' is added to the CNS title. This mirrors the ANP role.

**Figure 1: Clinical Nurse Specialists and Specialist Nurse Practitioner Roles Aligned to NES NMAHP Development Framework**



## Generalists and Specialists

There is considerable overlap between the roles of an ANP and an Advanced CNS. The difference is that the Advanced CNS is a specialist and the ANP is predominately a generalist.



## The CNS and the Advanced CNS

Both CNSs and Advanced CNSs assess, manage, deliver care, advise on, and support the care for people within a specialist area.

The difference is that those working at an advanced level will have a wider scope of practice and manage greater complexity with a higher level of decision making.



## Clinical Nurse Specialist/Nurse Practitioner – (Level 6)

A registered nurse with relevant experience and post-registration education for working within a specific area of practice. Educated in an appropriate subject to the level of graduate certificate (honours degree level) at a minimum, although a postgraduate certificate is recommended, they are assessed as clinically competent in their defined area of practice. They assess, manage, deliver care, advise on, and support the care for people within a specialist area.

As a Level 6 Senior Practitioner they work under guidance in a peer relationship with other members of the multidisciplinary team. They



have the autonomy to act and accept responsibility and accountability for their actions, acting as a skilled advisor or resource for others. This includes specialist assessment, informed decision making, and treatment using a personalised approach to care for patients' multidimensional presentations. This may require supporting specialist care over a prolonged period of time. They have the authority to refer patients, and may admit or discharge within appropriate clinical areas of practice. This is characterised by a level of decision making based on detailed knowledge and understanding of their area of practice.

As part of the multidisciplinary team they can work in or across many settings, including non-clinical, depending on their area of expertise and scope of practice.

## Clinical Nurse Specialist – Advanced Practice (Level 7)

The Advanced Clinical Nurse Specialist (ACNS) is an experienced and highly educated registered nurse working within a specific field of practice. They manage, deliver, advise on and support the care for people within a specialist area. Educated to at least postgraduate diploma level in an appropriate subject, they are assessed as clinically competent in their defined specialty. They have a wider scope of practice than the clinical nurse specialist at Level 6 and will manage greater complexity.

As a clinical leader they have the autonomy to act and accept responsibility and accountability for their actions, acting as an expert advisor or resource for others. This includes specialist assessment and treatment using a holistic approach to managing complex, multidimensional situations. This may require management of care over a prolonged period of time. They have the authority to refer, admit and discharge within appropriate clinical areas.

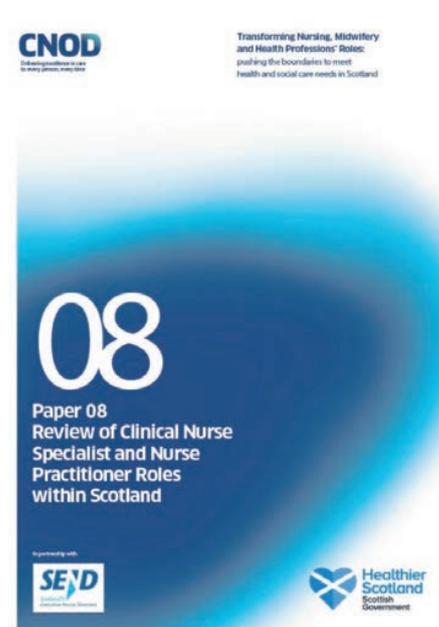
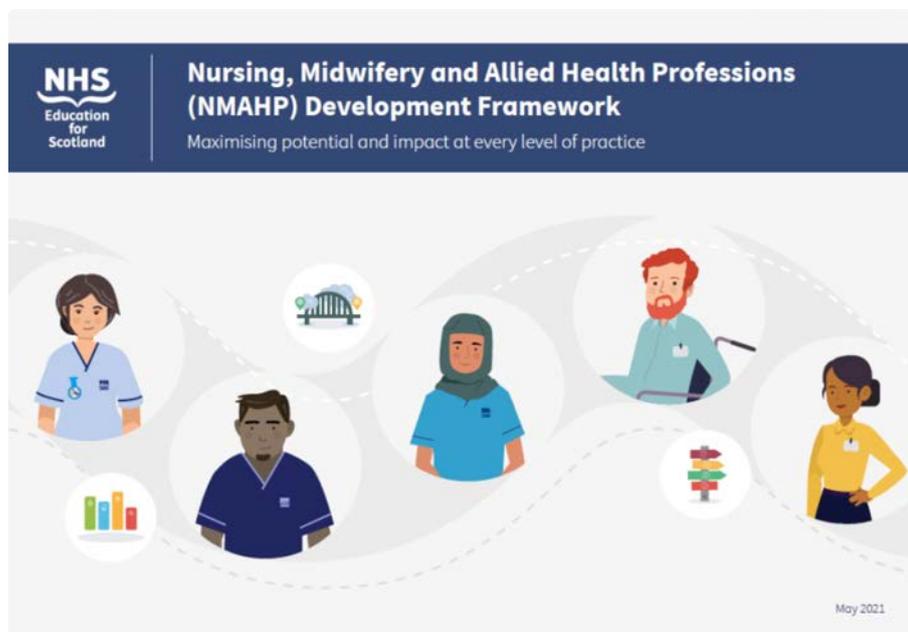
Their practice is characterised by a high level of clinical decision making based on in-depth, expert knowledge in their specialism of care delivery.

Working as part of the multidisciplinary team, they can work in or across all settings, including non-clinical areas, dependent on their area of expertise.



## Competencies

CNS and NP roles require knowledge, skills and behaviours across all four pillars of practice. The NES Development Framework ([www.careerframework.nes.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.careerframework.nes.scot.nhs.uk)) articulates these for each level on the framework. TR Paper 8 adds generic competencies specifically for the CNS and NP roles. Additional specialist competencies will come from each speciality.



### What does this mean for....?

#### Existing CNSs

CNSs who are employed and practising in CNS posts are CNSs and will continue to be recorded as such. As registered nurses, CNSs, are strongly recommended to maintain a portfolio of evidence demonstrating preparation for the role and for revalidation requirements.

Pay and conditions are unaffected as these are covered by the Agenda for Change terms and conditions and are evaluated using the NHS Job Evaluation Scheme.

Band 7 CNSs whose Job Descriptions describe an Advanced CNS (see appendix I in Paper 8), will be able to apply to be recorded as Advanced CNSs. Further information on this will be published on [www.nhsggc.org.uk/advancedpractice](http://www.nhsggc.org.uk/advancedpractice) in due course.

#### New CNSs and NPs

Moving forward new CNS and NP posts will be expected to meet the recommendations based in the TR paper. This will not happen overnight as job descriptions, competency frameworks and educational programmes will need to be reviewed against the recommendations and where necessary changes made. The corporate Advanced Practice team will be working with teams to implement.



More information will be published at [www.nhsggc.org.uk/advancedpractice](http://www.nhsggc.org.uk/advancedpractice) as work on implementation moves forward.

