Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist Induction Toolkit

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Introduction

Congratulations and welcome to your new role as a Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS).

This toolkit is specifically designed for newly appointed Clinical Nurse Specialists. Your Line Manager will play a crucial role in tailoring an induction program that aligns with both the service requirements and your individual needs. The toolkit provides clarity, guidance and consistency for managers overseeing the integration of a new CNS into the team. It complements the core Trust induction and mandatory training programs.

Aim

The aim of this toolkit is to provide a consistent and comprehensive induction, ensuring that all new CNSs receive an effective period of orientation that assists and supports them to become confident and competent in their new role.

Objectives

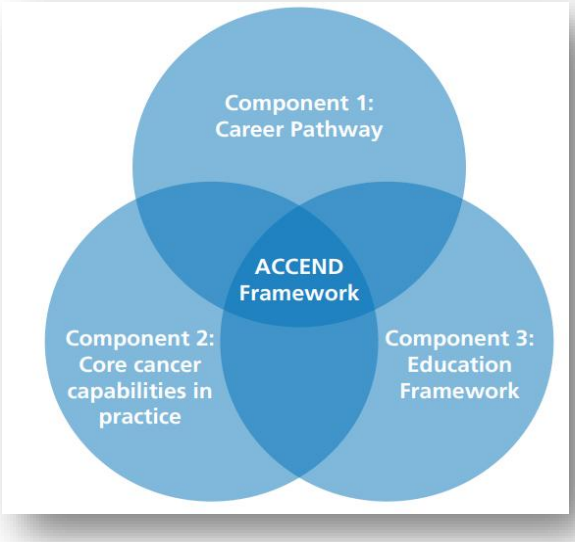
- To introduce ACCEND and understand how it supports professional development and a career pathway.
- To enable the CNS to understand the requirements of the role in a structured format.
- To recognise the importance of a well-considered orientation and induction programme.
- To enable the CNS to work safely and effectively within a new work environment.
- Advise the CNS on the educational and training requirements of this specialist role in cancer.

This toolkit will focus on the education and training of Clinical Nurse Specialists, highlighting the importance of identifying learning needs early to support your professional development as a CNS working at an enhanced/advanced level of practice. It is aligned to the ACCEND framework, which aims to develop knowledge, skills and capabilities throughout your career in cancer. It includes a list of core activities common to the CNS role, that can be adapted to suit local needs.

The Aspirant Cancer Career and Education Development Programme (ACCEND)

The ACCEND programme was launched in 2023 providing guidance on the knowledge, skills and capabilities required for all nurses and allied health professionals who care for people living with cancer. It provides a definitive career and development pathway for those aspiring to work in cancer. ACCEND is underpinned by learning related to the 4 pillars of professional practice – clinical practice; leadership and management; research/evidence-based practice and quality improvement; and education.

The framework has 3 components:



1. **Career Pathway**

   Identifies career levels for the workforce providing general and specialist cancer care. The levels of practice are distinguished as supportive, assistive, pre-registration, registration, enhanced, advanced and consultant levels. These levels of practice are used instead of roles or job titles. The career pathway aims to provide insight and guidance for the knowledge, behaviours and skills required to be working at each level of practice to enable the workforce to grow. This component distinguishes the levels of practice and the expected academic level education and relevant work-based development.

2. **Core Cancer Capabilities in Practice (CiPs)**

   Capabilities are the expected knowledge, skills and behaviours for practitioners at different levels of practice and allow them to demonstrate and develop their capability. These are spilt into different domains within the framework and are broken down for each level of practice. Your Line Manager will determine the appropriate level of practice for your role, allowing you to begin self-assessing against the relevant capabilities. This process will help you demonstrate your current knowledge, skills, and capabilities, while also identifying areas for further development.

   Wessex Cancer Alliance have partnered with Greater Manchester Cancer Academy and purchased a digital version of the ACCEND self-assessment tool, known as the ePortfolio. To learn more, visit:

Cancer Alliance Education ePortfolio – GM Cancer Academy or watch this introductory video - GM Cancer Academy: ePortfolio

To get started you will need to register and set up an account. For detailed instructions on how to use the ePortfolio, click here:

How to use the ePortfolio

3. **Education Framework**
   The education framework provides high level learning outcomes, syllabus and suggested assessment strategies for each part of the career pathway, supporting the knowledge requirements of the core cancer CiPs. The education framework includes:

   - Core knowledge for supportive, assistive and pre-registration levels identified in a module format called 'Foundations of Cancer Care'.
   - Core knowledge for registration, enhanced, advanced and consultant level practice identified in a module called 'Fundamentals of Cancer Care'.
   - High level learning outcomes for postgraduate certificate, Diploma and Masters awards which incorporate and develop the core knowledge identified in the 'Fundamentals of cancer care'.

   Practitioners may develop and demonstrate their knowledge, skills and capability through a range of education opportunities including work-based learning, online and university accredited courses.

   More information and recommendations for education at each level of practice can be found at:

   Career Pathway, Core Cancer Capabilities and Education Framework p21,22

The ACCEND Course Explorer helps you discover education, training and resources aligned to ACCEND and includes information on over 250 courses. You can use it to explore the CiPs by section or individually and find training and education to help you meet capabilities. You can also use it to check which capabilities are covered by training you may have already undertaken and help you consider further development to address any gaps.

Combined, these three components support practitioners at all levels of the career pathway to develop the core knowledge, skills and behaviours to care for people affected by cancer.

Where can I find more information on ACCEND?

To read the framework and the accompanying implementation guides & self-assessment tools, visit the HEE ACCEND webpage.

You can also find out more about the framework and the ACCEND programme by viewing a recording of a short presentation by Professor Vanessa Taylor, author of the framework.

Education that can support you develop the capabilities for ACCEND is highlighted on the Wessex Cancer Academy website – Education - Welcome to Wessex Cancer Alliance

Although ACCEND was launched in 2023, the implementation of such a large framework takes time, and each organisation is at a different stage based on its priorities. Please discuss with your Line Manager the implementation plan for your organisation.

Core elements for consideration in a Clinical Nurse Specialist induction

The following list outlines core activities to consider during your induction. These may vary depending on your role and organisation. Your Line Manger will confirm the priorities and the timeframe for completion e.g. First 6 months, year etc. We have aligned the activities with the ACCEND core capabilities to help you familiarise yourself with the framework, reflect on your current capabilities, and identify areas for development.

Table 1: Core activities for a Clinical Nurse Specialist Induction

ACCEND Domains and capabilities	Activity	Suggested Timescale	Notes
Domain A: Person-Centred Collaborative Working Capabilities: 1. Professional values and behaviours 2. Maintaining an ethical approach and fitness to practice/law/ethics and safeguarding 3. Person centred care 4. Communication and consultation skills 5. Personalising the pathway for people living with and affected by cancer. 6. Helping people make informed choices. 7. Providing information to support self-management and enable independence for people living with cancer. 8. Multidisciplinary, interagency and partnership working. 9. Referrals and integrated working to support transitional care for people living with cancer.	Attend & participate in MDT Meetings acting as patient advocate and representing nursing views. Understand processes and guidelines for creating person centred care through contributing to Holistic Needs Assessments, Care Plans, Treatment Summaries, health and wellbeing support across the system. Describing and undertaking interventions to deliver the care plan. Understand the role of risk stratification and the protocols and processes for Patient Stratified Follow-up. Identify agencies and referral processes providing psychosocial care such as counselling, psychology, financial advice, support groups and voluntary services. Identify core sources of patient information. Identify resources for individuals who require		

	additional assistance such as sensory and cognitive impairment, including the use of accessible information.		
Domain B: **Assessment, investigations and diagnosis** Capabilities: **10.** History Taking* **11.** Clinical, Physical & mental health assessment* **12.** Investigations, diagnosis and care planning *Please note this does not mean that you need to complete the academic module 'History Taking & Physical Assessment'. Your Line Manger will inform you if this is necessary for your role. For more detail please read the capabilities, pages 50-56: **Career Pathway, Core Cancer Capabilities and Education Framework**	Be present at Holistic Needs Assessments and creation of care plans to identify good practice and understand implications for person centred care. Meet the Cancer Support Worker, Cancer Care Coordinator and/or members of the supportive workforce to understand their role within the team. Be present during difficult and potentially distressing clinical conversations to understand your role. Meet key people in the diagnostic team and understand their role. Understand your role in delivering prehabilitation and rehabilitation.		
Domain C: **Condition management, treatment and planning** Capabilities: **13.** Clinical Management **14.** Managing medical and clinical complexity and risk **15.** Independent prescribing and pharmacotherapy **16.** Prehabilitation & Rehabilitation **17.** Promoting Self-Management & Behaviour change **18.** Symptom Management **19.** Late Effects **20.** Palliative and End of Life Care	Follow the patient's pathway to understand their experience and meet core MDT members delivering care. These may vary depending on tumour site and organisation: • Family History Clinics • Genomics • Prehab/Rehabilitation • Theatres • SACT Day Unit • Acute Oncology • Radiotherapy • Inpatient ward/s • Frailty team/service • Late Effects team/service		

	• Services supporting people living with and after cancer. • Palliative Care and end of life care Attend nurse led clinics to understand role, function and protocols. Attend Consultant led clinics to understand your role and function. Meet Pharmacist to understand medicine management and local prescribing protocols.		
Domain D: **Leadership and collaborative practice** Capabilities: **21.** Leadership, management and organisation	Develop a job plan with your Line Manager in line with your job description. Meet the following key stakeholders to understand their role and strategic plans for cancer in your area: • MDT Team members • Lead Cancer Nurse • Lead AHP • Matrons • Cancer Manager • Divisional Nurse Director • Radiotherapy Service Manager • Education Lead/Practice Educator • Outpatient Nurse Manager • Voluntary services in your organisation Attend relevant Cancer Alliance meetings e.g. tumour specific groups. Identify national forums that you may wish to join. Meet Patient Advice and Liaison Service to		

	understand protocols for plaudits and complaints. Review results and action plan from recent National Cancer Patient Experience Survey. Identify sources for wellbeing support within your organisation.		
Domain E: **Developing evidence-based practice and improving quality** Capabilities: **22.** Research & Evidence Based practice	Understanding of site-specific research trials open to your patient group and key contacts. Obtain an overview of the Governance structure within your directorate and attend a Governance meeting.		
Domain F: **Developing evidence-based practice and improving quality** Capabilities: **23.** Service evaluation and quality improvement.	Understand core data requirements and the systems for capturing and collating. Meet local Patient Involvement Group to understand how they can support/inform service improvement. Meet Trust Quality Improvement Team to identify support and training available. Meet local Macmillan contact (if Macmillan Professional) to understand Macmillan role supporting quality improvement. Obtain an overview of current quality improvement projects or audits.		

Domain G: **Educating and Developing self and others** Capabilities: **24.** Education	Set up an account for the Greater Manchester eportfolio for ACCEND and begin reflection and self-assessment against the core capabilities. Agree priorities with your Line Manager. Identify process for Clinical Supervision in your area and actively participate. Identify local education opportunities such as journal clubs, Schwartz Rounds. Identify sources of funding for education and training.		

Education and Training

The ACCEND Framework identifies key learning and development opportunities for each level of practice.

The table below summarises the recommendations for enhanced and advanced level practitioners. This should be discussed with your Line Manger considering your past knowledge and experience, development plan and appropriate time to undertake.

Table 2: Education Framework: Learning and development routes for cancer nursing.

Level of Practice	Enhanced	Advanced
Core cancer knowledge	Fundamentals of Cancer Care module postgraduate level or equivalent	Fundamentals of Cancer Care module postgraduate level or equivalent
Core cancer CiPs (Levels)	**Enhanced**	**Advanced**
Examples of additional role specific and professional development Further details about specific courses, learning and development opportunities are available on the Wessex Cancer Academy website:	• Site specific or role development specific • Enhanced/ Advanced communication skills (depending on previous knowledge/experience) • Psychological assessment and support (Level 2)	• Site specific or role development specific • Advanced communication skills • Psychological assessment and support (Level 2) • Independent & supplementary prescribing

Development pathways - Welcome to Wessex Cancer Alliance	• Edward Jenner Programme • Independent & supplementary prescribing	• Rosalind Franklin Programme • Other HEE advanced practice credentials developed Credentials - Advanced Practice

The module 'Fundamentals in Cancer Care' is recommended for nurses working at an enhanced and advanced level of practice to enable you to deliver optimal care for people affected by cancer. Whilst presented in a 'modular format', the learning outcomes, syllabi and the core cancer capabilities for each level of practice may be incorporated into credit bearing and non-credit bearing CPD or guide workplace-based learning. Practitioners may develop their knowledge, skills and evidence their capability through a range of opportunities including:

- workplace-based learning and reflection
- continuing professional development (CPD) events
- elearning/online learning resources
- university accredited modules and programme

The following links take you to organisations offering the Fundamentals in Cancer Care module:

- Fundamentals of Cancer Care 2026 - Welcome to Wessex Cancer Alliance
- Fundamentals in Cancer Care | TRM School
- Fundamentals of Cancer Care - Professional/Short course - UWE Bristol: Courses
- CANC600/6002 Fundamentals in Cancer Care: Dates :: Clatterbridge Clinical Education

Wessex Cancer Academy webpages on education & training opportunities signposts you to reputable education providers and training and development opportunities for the cancer workforce as well as helpful resources. All access is open and free unless otherwise stated:

- Education - Welcome to Wessex Cancer Alliance
- EMCA Aspirant CNS Development Programme is a programme of study for registered nurses to enhance their understanding of caring for people affected by cancer with a view to becoming a CNS within cancer teams. Depending on your previous experience it may be useful when you are new in a CNS role. It covers modules such as SACT, surgery, genomics, psychological support, communications skills and others. All modules are provided by recognised learning platforms including Macmillan Cancer Support, eLFH.

Post Graduate training

Following self-assessment of the core cancer capabilities outlined in ACCEND and discussion with your Line Manager you may want to consider some of the courses below as part of your development plan:

- Advances in Cancer Care
- Psychological Skills in Cancer Care
- Principles of Personalised Care

- Healthy Discussions to Support Self-management
- Counselling Skills in Genomics for Health Care Professionals

These modules can be accessed as stand-alone CPD modules, or combined to complete a Port-graduate certificate, diploma or an MSc Professional Practice in Health Sciences.

Please visit the Wessex Cancer Academy website for more information on the modules and funding opportunities: MSc Modules - Welcome to Wessex Cancer Alliance

Finally, we really hope you enjoy your role and appreciate the difference you make to people living with and affected by cancer. If you want to discuss any of the content or have further queries, feel free to discuss with your Line Manager or get in touch with the individuals highlighted below:

Key Contacts

- Lead Cancer Nurse –
- Mentor –
- Trust ACCEND Facilitators/Champions –
- Wessex Cancer Alliance ACCEND Lead for nurses – Sinead.parry@wca.uhs.nhs.uk