

CAREER Structure & you

The second edition of this newsletter outlines the new RN/RM Level Two roles in the South Australian Public Sector Career Structure.

Copies of the newsletters and future information about other career structure roles, issues and work conditions can be found at:

www.nursingsa.com/prof_career.php

and also on the ANF website at www.sa.anf.org.au

Introduction:

The 2007 career structure has evolved from ideas and information given by the many nurses and midwives who participated in the review process during 2006-2007.

The review proposals became part of the Enterprise Bargaining negotiations between the State Government and the Australian Nursing Federation (SA Branch) and a new career structure has emerged as a result of these processes.

The Nursing/Midwifery Career Structure

- improves health service capacity by fully utilising nursing/midwifery roles
- improves clinical effectiveness and patient/client outcomes



- provides a professional basis for the salaries and work conditions of nurses and midwives.

The key concept of the new structure is the increased emphasis on clinical practice and the extension of career paths to provide multiple career path advancement opportunities in the areas of clinical, management, education, research and policy. The term clinical is used in its broadest sense of professional health care relationships with people.

The structure recognises that nursing/midwifery practice may be undertaken within a variety of philosophies of care. These may vary from wellness and recovery approaches to palliative care models, from specifically nursing or midwifery models to medical models focused on illness and disease.

Modernising the language and descriptions of nursing/midwifery work better articulates this work to others as well as within our professions.

The career structure demonstrates the progression of knowledge, skills, responsibility and accountability required.

Implementation of the new structure will also contribute to improved role consistency across different public sector worksites and settings.

The career structure provides two Level 2 classifications consisting of:

- The Associate Clinical Services Coordinator (ACSC) which is attained through a merit based appointed
- The Clinical Nurse/Midwife (CN/M) which can only be accessed through personal reclassification.

Increased expectations at the Level 2 classification:

In comparison with roles at Level 1, there are a number of changes in the expectations of Level 2 roles.

Overall practice is expected to be undertaken at a more advanced and pro-active level. In addition to safely and competently providing care, a Level 2 role includes a requirement to focus on whether the planned nursing/midwifery care is actually achieving the best patient/client outcomes.

Thus more attention is required at this level to the evaluation of care and patient/client outcomes, and to decisions regarding which interventions are the best for each situation.

It follows, that in terms of patient/client allocation, Level 2 nurses/midwives (with more advanced skills) would generally be matched with patients/clients with more complex care requirements. In addition, it follows that, Level 2 nurses/midwives would support Level 1 nurses/midwives and Enrolled Nurses in the care of their patients/clients.

At Level 2 advanced theoretical and clinical knowledge, evidence from a range of sources, and information from one's own experience and learning are expected to be integrated to devise and achieve agreed patient/client care outcomes.

At Level 2 the roles include increased guidance and development of less experienced staff. This part of the role is more than 'role modelling', it is also about providing active support to the ward/unit team leader to achieve consistency of standards and service outcomes across and between shifts.

Level 2 roles are also expected to be more proactive than Level 1 roles in terms of acting to resolve local nursing or midwifery care or service delivery problems and actively support practice improvement processes.

Access to the new Level 2 roles:

Current nurses/midwives appointed to Clinical Nurse (Level 2) roles will remain as a level 2 and translate to new salary levels for the Nursing/Midwifery Associate Clinical Services Coordinator.

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The Clinical Nurse/Midwife position is operational from March 2008. Registered Nurses and Midwives with at least three years full time equivalent post registration experience will be able to apply for personal reclassification to the new Clinical Nurse/Midwife role. Thus any Level 1 RN/RM from Year 4 to Year 9 and thereafter will be able to apply to move to the new Clinical Nurse/Midwife role.

All Registered Nurses, who believe they meet the position criteria, are eligible to apply for personal reclassification to this role regardless of whether they are full or Part-time employees.

The new personal reclassification process will be consistent across all worksites and when reclassification has been achieved the successful applicant will be appointed to the Clinical Nurse/Midwife position.

Guidelines for Personal Reclassification from Level 1 to Level 2 are currently being developed and will be available via;
www.nursingsa.com/prof_career.php

Review feedback included some concerns that having additional Level 2 roles would create "too many chiefs and not enough Indians", but remember that the new Level 2 roles are clinical in focus and will thus be providing clinical care as part of the team. This new role classification provides registered nurses/midwives with recognition and remuneration for clinical achievement and commitment to improving clinical outcome.

Part-time work and night duty:

Both career structure roles at RN/RM Level 2 are available to Registered nurses and midwives who work part-time and those who work permanent night duty.

This responds to Review feedback that indicated that although no formal policies prevented part-timers from working in higher grades, informally it was general practice not to do so and that usually these grades were advertised as full time, excluding others from applying.

Job descriptions for Level 2 roles:

The points listed in the box below will form the major part of the job description for Level 2 roles.

Clinical nurse/midwife (Level 2)

Employees classified at this level provide advanced nursing and/or midwifery. The activities required of roles at this level are predominantly clinical in nature. Work at this level is undertaken by employees with at least 3 years post registration experience.

Employees in these roles will:

- Provide proficient clinical nursing/midwifery care and/or individual case management to patients/clients in a defined clinical area;
- Assess patients/clients needs, plan, implement and coordinate appropriate service delivery options and communicate changes in condition and care;
- Oversee the provision of nursing/midwifery care within a team or unit;
- Provide health education, counselling and rehabilitation programs to improve the health outcomes of individual patients/clients or groups;
- Plan and coordinate services including those of other disciplines or agencies as required to meet individual and/or group health care needs;
- Monitor client care plans and participate in clinical auditing and/or evaluative research to ensure appropriate patient care outcomes are achieved on a daily basis;
- Demonstrate and promote a risk minimisation approach to practice and support implementation and maintenance of systems to protect patients and staff;
- Integrate advanced

theoretical knowledge, evidence from a range of sources and own experience to devise and achieve agreed patient care outcomes;

- Work within and promote a nursing model of client centred care or midwifery model of partnership and support for women's right to self determination in life processes;
- Act to resolve local and/or immediate nursing care or service delivery problems;
- Support change management processes;
- Contribute to communication processes that effectively deal with challenging behaviours and the resolution of conflicts;
- Work within a local nursing/midwifery leadership team to attain consistency of nursing/midwifery practice standards and local service outcomes;
- Participate in clinical teaching, overseeing learning experiences, and goal setting for students, new staff and staff with less experience;
- Act as a resource person within an area based on knowledge, experience and skills.
- Manage own professional development activities and portfolio, support the development of others and contribute to learning in the work area.

One of the key features of the new role is an increased emphasis on communication of changes and the monitoring of practice activities and patient/client condition.

The aim of this new emphasis is to spell out the Level 2 responsibility for contributing to the care team acting consistently and in accordance with agreed standards of practice.

Another key feature of the new Level 2 role is the recognition of this role as a

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proficient clinician. Such a role carries with it the responsibility of sharing of knowledge and skills. The role descriptors therefore include acting as a resource to others and providing teaching and support to students and less experienced staff in the course of your practice.

A further change is the shift from the idea of supervising others, to all Level 2 nurses/midwives being responsible for overseeing care provision and focusing on consistency of standards and achievement of outcomes. This change mirrors the changes at new levels 3, 4 and 5 to move from the perspective of supervisory management to leadership through demonstration of good practice.

The aim of this change of role is to improve the work culture by emphasising team support, and encouraging each other as professional peers. These changes are in response to Review feedback seeking a move away from punitive and controlling approaches to nurses and midwives.

The new roles also emphasise consistency of practices and standards across shifts and across patient/client care areas and the achievement of patient/client outcomes as our key professional goal.

The new role requires that each nurse/midwife at this level is working to ensure that agreed care standards are met by everyone in the team and that patient/client outcomes are the focus of all clinical practices. In some cases this may require a review of what drives clinical activities in your ward/unit. Are things done by rote whether or not they contribute to better patient/client outcomes or are all activities applied with consideration of their usefulness to achieving the patient/client outcome goals?

Finally, as an advanced practitioner, nurses/midwives at Level 2 will research through evaluation and auditing of local nursing/midwifery practices. They will be active in supporting changes to improve care, resolving local service problems and supporting nursing/midwifery local leaders and teams.

In addition to the role functions above, some other activities may be required in

some settings and for some periods of time. This is not dissimilar to current processes requiring certain activities or portfolios of responsibility (eg Infection Control link nurse roles, or local responsibility for ward in-service organisation).

Clinical nurse/midwife (Level 2)

In addition to the foregoing the employee may:

- Be required to participate in and/or provide clinical teaching and/or research;
- Be required to contribute to a wider or external area team working on complex or organisation wide projects such as clinical protocols, guidelines, process mapping;
- Be required to undertake a specific activity and/or portfolio to support the practice area/Health Unit;
- Be required, within pre-determined guidelines, and in a multi multidisciplinary primary health care setting, to assess clients, select and implement different therapeutic interventions and/or support programs and evaluate client progress.

Professional portfolios:

The role descriptions at all levels include a clause about lifelong learning and professional practice portfolios.

In Level 2 roles, the nurse or midwife is expected to “manage own professional development activities and portfolio, support the development of others and contribute to learning in the work area”. “A professional portfolio is a structured collection of different types of evidence that show the individual's professional goals, competencies, career achievements and continuing professional development activities and experiences”. (Kate Andre Marie Heartfield 2007)

Specific information on Professional Portfolios and examples of evidence for meeting each role criteria will be

included in the Personal Reclassification Guidelines for the Clinical Nurse/Midwife role.

Accountability:

Professional accountability assumes willingness to be held accountable for demonstrating adequate expertise and capability in a role in terms of the decisions and actions taken.

Accepting any role in nursing or midwifery includes an acceptance of the extent of accountability that comes with the role.

Clinical nurse/midwife (Level 2) accountability

An employee at this level accepts accountability for own practice standards, activities delegated to others and the guidance and development of less experienced staff.

Nursing/Midwifery Associate Clinical Service Coordinators

One of the key principles agreed in developing the new career structure was that in clinically focused professions such as nursing and midwifery, the work value of advanced clinical roles should be equated with management and education roles with similar level responsibilities.

The new Nurse/Midwife Associate Clinical Service Coordinator (N/M ACSC) role is designed as a different role to the previous Clinical Nurse role. It remains a role achieved by appointment, since the leadership skills required in this role are not necessarily demonstrated by all level 2 clinicians.

Level 2 N/M ACSCs do not necessarily have more responsibility than other Level 2 Clinical Nurses or Midwives. Their role responsibilities may be different but equivalent in skills and responsibility. They may also exercise their responsibilities in a different way.

In particular, these roles are designed to provide active clinical support to Level 3 roles, ensuring continuity of agreed

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team values and practice standards. Refer to **may** statement of N/M ACSC role descriptors below.

Level 2 N/M ACSCs have the following role descriptor statements to describe their work.

Associate Nursing or Midwifery Clinical Service Co-ordinators (Level 2)

Within the requirements of the Clinical Nurse/Midwife role, employees in these roles will undertake an Associate Coordinator portfolio within which they will:

- Promote continuity and consistency of care in collaboration with other Associate Clinical Service Coordinators and the Clinical Service Coordinator of the ward/unit;
- Assist the Nursing/Midwifery Clinical Service Coordinator in ongoing communication and implementation of practice changes;
- Assist the Nursing/Midwifery Clinical Service Coordinator to maintain and record monitoring and evaluative research activities in the ward/unit;
- Assist the Nursing/Midwifery Clinical Service Coordinator and Nursing/Midwifery Educators to maintain a learning culture by encouraging reflection and professional development and assisting others to maintain portfolios/records of learning, and
- **May** be required to assist the Nursing/Midwifery Clinical Service Coordinator in undertaking performance management processes and/or rostering and/or oversight of supplies and/or equipment.

The Level 2 N/M ACSCs continues to be an active member of the clinical practice team with time allowance for activities that assist the Nursing or Midwifery Clinical Service Coordinator in their leadership of the nursing or midwifery team and the service area.

Numbers of Associate CSCs:

The new career structure does not restrict the numbers of ACSCs that may be appointed within a given nursing or midwifery team.

The number of positions with this role will differ according to differences in the nature and context of the service area.

Level 2 roles in all care settings

The emphasis of the new career structure is on the increasing advancement of knowledge, skills and experience. Thus many different models of care or philosophical approaches to care can occur within the same classification structure.

Eligible Registered nurses and midwives in all settings are encouraged to apply for re-classification.

Level 2 roles in Community

Registered Nurse/Midwife Level 1 can occur in the community however the new Clinical Nurse/Midwife position provides an opportunity for nurses/midwives at this level to apply to reclassify if they met the role criteria.

Level 2 roles in the community may align with the new Nurse/ Midwife Clinical Nurse role not the Associate Clinical Services Coordinator role.

A specific role description in the position criteria for the Clinical Nurse/Midwife that addresses the community level 2 role is as follows;

Be required, within pre-determined guidelines, and in a multi multidisciplinary primary health care setting, to assess clients, select and implement different therapeutic interventions and/or support programs and evaluate client progress

Level 2 roles in Country

The new structure should allow a significant increase in recognition and remuneration for the experience and responsibilities held by country based staff.

Many full time and part time country nurses and midwives function in relative isolation and thus exercise high levels of autonomy in their clinical decision making.

Country nurses and midwives who meet the criteria are encouraged to apply for reclassification to achieve this recognition for their work.

Level 2 lines of reporting:

The most common line of professional accountability for Level 2 roles will be to a person holding the classification of Nursing or Midwifery Clinical Service Co-ordinator (Level 3 or 4).

Level 2 Clinical Nurses are not **supervised** by Nursing/Midwifery Associate CSCs - both roles are Level 2 roles and are expected to have an equal or peer relationship.

Want to know more?

To get more information, go to www.nursingsa.com/prof_career.php

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