

---

# Clinical Dermatology Nursing Role Descriptors:

Guidance on scope of practice

AFC Bands 5-8

Version 2, March 2023





# Introduction

This guidance document has been developed collaboratively by the British Dermatological Nursing Group (BDNG) and British Association of Dermatologists (BAD). This work was carried out under the auspices of the BAD Education Board: Nursing work-stream. The final document is the result of the work from that board and wide consultation with members of both organisations in 2019. The role descriptors have been endorsed by the Royal College of Nursing.

Development of the document was driven by the need for greater clarity on the scope of nursing roles in the delivery of dermatology services. This has become all the more urgent in the context of increasing service demands nationally. The document is intended to help support recruitment, retention and career development of nurses in the specialty and should serve as a foundation for planning education and training initiatives. In addition the role descriptors aim to ensure equality and consistency across the UK and support appropriate banding and remuneration for level of practice, responsibility and autonomy. Specifically, this document aims to:

- Provide a general consensus on the levels of practice for nurses in dermatology and where relevant link Agenda for Change (AfC) grading
- Support nurses in their career progression
- Support service leads and managers in reviewing workforce requirements and skill mix to support dermatology service provision

- Serve as a framework for education and training development and commissioning
- Facilitate transparency and quality assurance for nursing in dermatology

The document is developed on the premise that it applies to nurses working in the delivery of NHS services in the UK. This may be in community, secondary or tertiary care dermatology services. It is based on the assumption that the nurse is primarily in a dermatology clinical role (minimum 50%). The document has been written with the intention of being for guidance only. The clinical skills cited are suggestions and are not mandatory. These role descriptors should be used alongside local or national guidelines (e.g. BAD standards & guidelines for phototherapy, BDNG Core Quality Standards for Dermatology Nursing Interventions and Services, BDNG skin cancer nursing competencies).

It is acknowledged that the countries of the UK may have taken slightly different approaches to AfC, however the role descriptors can be adapted to other national frameworks as seen fit. It is also acknowledged that the descriptors will need to be applied with a level of flexibility, depending on specific work environments e.g. primary care or secondary care or for those working with a specific patient group e.g. children and young people.

---

Advanced clinical practice post holders (8a and above) should be mapped to relevant country guidance:

- **In England:** Health Education England (2017) Multi-professional framework for advanced clinical practice in England
- **In Northern Ireland:** Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (2016) Advanced Nursing Practice Framework: Supporting Advanced Nursing Practice in Health and Social Care NIPEC
- **In Scotland:** Paper 07: Transferring nursing roles. Advanced Nursing Practice Phase II (2021)
- **In Wales:** National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare (2010) Framework for Advanced Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professional Practice in Wales NHS Wales

Consultant nurse posts should be mapped to relevant country guidance:

- **In England:** Department of Health (1999) Nurse, midwife and health visitor consultants: establishing posts and making appointments, HSC 1999/217
- **In Northern Ireland:** Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (2017) Professional Guidance for Consultant Roles: Supporting Consultant Nurses and Midwives in Health and Social Care NIPEC
- **In Scotland:** The Scottish Government (2010) Consultant Nurses, Midwives and Allied Health Professionals: Guidance for NHS Boards
- **In Wales:** National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare (2010) Framework for Advanced Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professional Practice in Wales NHS Wales

These role descriptors should be viewed in the context of the Nursing and Midwifery Council Code of Professional Conduct which is relevant in all four countries.

The document is a live document which will be freely available to members and non-members of both authoring organizations via their respective websites. The document will be reviewed and updated at least annually. Copyright is jointly owned by the BAD and BDNG and whilst the role descriptors can be freely used the source should always be acknowledged.

**This document was written by members of the BAD Education Board: Nursing work-stream:**

**Tamara Griffiths**

Academic Vice-President,  
British Association of Dermatologists

**Karina Jackson**

Workstream Chair / Nurse Consultant,  
St. John's Institute of Dermatology

**Sandra Lawton**

Nurse Consultant and Clinical Lead Dermatology,  
Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust

**George Millington**

Past Academic Vice-President,  
British Association of Dermatologists

**Rebecca Penzer-Hick**

President,  
British Dermatology Nursing Group

**Julia Wheeler**

Past Educational Development Nurse,  
British Dermatological Nursing Group

# Clinical Dermatology Nursing Role Descriptors: guidance on scope of practice

This table provides suggested scope of practice, aligned with AfC\* banding, for registered nurses working primarily in a clinical role in a dermatology setting. Nurses may undertake the clinical procedures and skills cited according to their specific area of practice.

The list is not exhaustive and is for illustration purposes. It is not expected that all nurses undertake all procedures. Grading at a local level will be determined by a combination of factors including level of clinical autonomy and responsibility for practice and service delivery, combined with leadership in the broader domains of practice. Wherever relevant nurses at all bands should be competent at carrying out consultations face to face or remotely via video or telephone technology.

AfC*	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8a	Band 8b-8c
<b>Suggested title</b>	<b>Dermatology nurse (staff nurse)</b>	<b>Dermatology nurse (senior staff nurse)</b>	<b>Clinical Nurse Specialist (Dermatology)</b>	<b>Advanced nurse practitioner (Dermatology)</b>	<b>Consultant nurse (Dermatology)</b>
<b>Clinical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working under the direction of a specialist (e.g. senior clinical nurse/ medical consultant)</li> <li>Undertakes health and care needs assessment, planning, implementing and evaluating nursing care</li> <li>Not expected to make independent decisions which may alter patient's medical / surgical management plan</li> <li>Make referral to support services following Trust policies e.g. district nursing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making clinical decisions for a defined patient group</li> <li>May be an independent prescriber for a defined patient group or undertaking medicines management including use of a patient group direction (PGD)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Works independently with a wide group of patients with a confirmed diagnosis</li> <li>Works in complex clinical situations requiring liaison and initiative</li> <li>Independent non-medical prescriber (where applicable)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advanced clinical assessment and examination skills (systems review)</li> <li>Diagnostic skills</li> <li>Works autonomously</li> <li>Independent prescriber essential</li> <li>Highly specialised or broad patient cohort</li> <li>Complex decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May be named consultant for specific patient cohort</li> <li>May receive direct referrals to own consultant-led service</li> <li>Supervising clinical decision making for nursing / wider healthcare team</li> </ul>

\*[Agenda for Change \(AfC\)](#) is the national pay system for all NHS staff, with the exception of doctors, dentists and most senior managers.

AfC*	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8a	Band 8b-8c
<b>Suggested title</b>	<b>Dermatology nurse (staff nurse)</b>	<b>Dermatology nurse (senior staff nurse)</b>	<b>Clinical Nurse Specialist (Dermatology)</b>	<b>Advanced nurse practitioner (Dermatology)</b>	<b>Consultant nurse (Dermatology)</b>
<b>Examples of clinical practice areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phototherapy</li> <li>• Leg ulcer management</li> <li>• Wound-care</li> <li>• Assisting surgery</li> <li>• General advice and support to patients / families / carers</li> <li>• Administration of medicines</li> <li>• Patch testing</li> <li>• Treatment counselling</li> <li>• Topical treatment / bandaging</li> <li>• Camouflage advice</li> <li>• Iontophoresis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As per band 5 role frequently without close direction.</li> <li>• Lower risk, less invasive skin surgery procedures:</li> <li>• e.g. simple punch biopsy, involving lower risk sites e.g. below the neck</li> <li>• Photodynamic therapy</li> <li>• Disease or therapy focused nurse led follow up clinics with protocol e.g. wound care, biologics, isotretinoin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long term skin disease management clinic</li> <li>• Drug monitoring clinic</li> <li>• Ordering blood investigations, interpreting and acting on results</li> <li>• Skin cancer screening</li> <li>• Higher risk, more invasive skin surgery procedures: e.g. flaps/ grafts, involving higher risk sites e.g. above the neck</li> <li>• Inclusion in skin cancer multi-disciplinary meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independently receiving and making onward referrals e.g. in skin cancer, children and young people, inflammatory skin disease clinic</li> <li>• Taking an independent and leadership role in carrying out surgical procedures which are diverse or more complex</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as for Band 7/8a, but more specialized, complex and greater autonomy and clinical responsibility</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership / management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starting to develop an awareness of own leadership styles and abilities</li> <li>• Showing some leadership qualities in clinical situations</li> <li>• Supervision of non-registered staff and mentoring students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leader of a small team</li> <li>• Showing initiative in change management</li> <li>• Active participant in quality improvement projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrating significant clinical leadership through innovation</li> <li>• Undertaking change management projects</li> <li>• Role modelling / mentorship</li> <li>• Advocate for specialty beyond the workplace</li> <li>• Team leader</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant project management on a larger scale including implementation strategies and evaluation</li> <li>• Quality and safety leadership within domain of practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leads a clinical team/ provides leadership to multi-disciplinary group</li> <li>• At the cutting edge of innovation in practice</li> <li>• Major change projects</li> <li>• Strategic role across traditional boundaries</li> <li>• National / international influence / policy leadership role</li> </ul>



AfC*	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8a	Band 8b-8c
<b>Suggested title</b>	<b>Dermatology nurse (staff nurse)</b>	<b>Dermatology nurse (senior staff nurse)</b>	<b>Clinical Nurse Specialist (Dermatology)</b>	<b>Advanced nurse practitioner (Dermatology)</b>	<b>Consultant nurse (Dermatology)</b>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching skills-based tasks to other staff once competent</li> <li>Undertaking teaching for small groups / students within the department</li> <li>Supporting student nurses by being a named mentor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal teaching sessions for other staff within the organisation</li> <li>Involvement in patient / public information initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal teaching inside and outside of the organisation</li> <li>Links with Higher Education Institutes (HEIs)</li> <li>Leading patient / public information initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal multi-professional teaching inside and outside of the organisation</li> <li>Advocate and promoter of dermatology within HEI's</li> <li>Education and training leadership role with organisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal education and training relationship with HEI's</li> <li>Teaching on an national and international platform across professional boundaries</li> <li>Strategic lead in development of specialist education / training</li> </ul>
<b>Research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to access and use relevant evidence-based guidelines to inform practice</li> <li>May support clinical trial and audit activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aware of the literature around practice</li> <li>Using literature to inform practice</li> <li>Aware of literature searching and reviewing</li> <li>Undertaking audit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wide knowledge of research literature</li> <li>Able to search literature and critically appraise</li> <li>Data collection and interpretation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involved in primary research / evaluation to improve clinical practice / patient outcomes</li> <li>May be involved as a Principal Investigator</li> <li>Publishing research independently or as part of a team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involved in primary research / evaluation to improve clinical practice / patient outcomes</li> <li>Multidisciplinary / specialty research collaborator</li> <li>Principal investigator or may be chief investigator</li> <li>Developing others research capacity and engagement</li> <li>Lead author</li> </ul>

# Possible Training and Development Strategies for Career Progression

	From Band 5 to Band 6	From Band 6 to Band 7	From Band 7 to Band 8
<b>Clinical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-house skills training (on the job)</li> <li>• Competency frameworks</li> <li>• BDNG on line</li> <li>• Specific clinical training modules</li> <li>• Topic specific study days via BDNG / BAD / sponsored events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-house skills training (on the job)</li> <li>• Specialised clinical courses</li> <li>• Formal MSc study in advanced practice or dermatology MSc</li> <li>• Independent non-medical prescribers training</li> <li>• BDNG conference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-house skills training (on the job)</li> <li>• BAD conference</li> <li>• International conferences</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BDNG ambassador programme</li> <li>• Audit training</li> <li>• NHS / In-house leadership development programme</li> <li>• Become a link nurse or team lead for area of practice e.g. infection control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On the job improvement project</li> <li>• Masters level education module in leadership</li> <li>• Participate in an external group/committee</li> <li>• Governance and safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHS leadership academy training</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentor training</li> <li>• Local teaching and presentation experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make links with higher education for more formal role</li> <li>• Undertake a teaching qualification</li> <li>• Clinical, service development/change management or audit/research publications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post graduate teaching qualification</li> </ul>
<b>Research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research awareness course</li> <li>• Literature critical appraisal skills training</li> <li>• Participation in audit exercise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On line Centre for Evidence Based Dermatology education packages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK Dermatology Clinical Trials Network course</li> <li>• Undertaking doctoral studies</li> <li>• National Institute for Health Research fellowships</li> </ul>