Advanced Skills Enrolled Nurse

Toolkit for the Implementation of the ASEN role in South Australia
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Introduction

The Nursing/Midwifery (South Australian Public Sector) Enterprise Agreement affirms the Advanced Skills Enrolled Nurse (ASEN) position in the SA Health nursing and midwifery career structure. The ASEN position is a merit based appointment as determined by Local Health Network (LHNs). The ASEN classification was operative from 1 December 2011.

This Toolkit is designed to assist LHNs health services and units to facilitate the successful implementation of the ASEN role within SA Health.

Background

Benefits of the ASEN role to health services/units

It is acknowledged that today's health care is provided in a complex and continually changing environment. The South Australian Government is reforming the state's public health care system with an aim to promote health and well-being to all South Australians and reduce hospital attendance. The SA Health Care Plan 2007-2016 sets the strategic direction of health reform in South Australia, with its key elements incorporated in all major service planning and clinical service planning across primary health care services and major hospitals.

The two major challenges ahead for the SA Health system are:

- Enabling the health system to respond more adequately to the rise in demand for services
- Developing out of hospital services, including health promotion, early intervention and expansion of primary health and intermediate care, to reduce the rate of growth in hospital demand.

The changing South Australian healthcare landscape requires care and service responses that build on modern, evidence-based practice and innovation in thinking and design. Approaching health reform in a comprehensive and integrated way is essential if we are to meet the challenges of delivering the right care, at the right time, by the right people, first time.

The ASEN role represents an opportunity to respond to these issues by providing a nursing model of care that embraces advanced skills and knowledge within a collaborative nursing framework. Enrolled Nurses can increase the capacity of the Australian health workforce to meet these increasing demands in areas of strategic relevance to workforce development and clinical care.

The ASEN role is guided by agreed competency standards for enrolled nursing practice and directly aligns to the Australian Qualifications Framework.
Definition of the Advanced Skills Enrolled Nurse

The ASEN is an Enrolled Nurse who will either:

- Hold an Advanced Diploma of Enrolled Nursing and have three years full time equivalent experience in the relevant clinical area, OR
- Have five years full time equivalent experience in the relevant clinical area and have demonstrated advanced skills and knowledge in client/patient assessment, care management and leadership responsibilities.

In addition to fulfilling the duties of an Enrolled Nurse, an ASEN has:

- A high level of specialisation in an area or field of practice
- A higher level of clinical knowledge and skills informed by further education and on the job experience
- A greater level of delegated responsibility in the management of client/patient care which may include clinical and non-clinical roles
- More indirect levels of supervision
- A leadership role within the ASEN scope of practice
- The ability to network and develop partnerships
- A commitment to lifelong learning and inquiry.

An ASEN is an Enrolled Nurse who is registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia. The ASEN supports the Registered Nurse/Midwife in the provision of person centred care. Employees at this level work under the direction and supervision of the Registered Nurse/Midwife. However, the ASEN retains responsibility for their actions whilst remaining accountable to the Registered Nurse/Midwife for all delegated functions.

The ASEN is able to perform within their full scope of practice in a spectrum of roles, functions, responsibilities, activities and decision-making capacities within which the Enrolled Nurse is educated, competent and authorised to perform. The ASEN scope of professional practice is influenced by legislative requirements, professional standards such as competency standards, codes of ethics and conduct, public need, demand and expectations.

To ensure successful implementation of new ASEN roles, there needs to be a collaborative, systematic and evidence based approach. The ASEN role is grounded in nursing values, knowledge, theories and practice and provides innovative and flexible health care delivery that complements other health care providers. The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia’s (NMBA) National Framework for the Development of Decision-Making Tools for Nursing and Midwifery Practice will assist nurses and midwives at all levels to determine scope of practice issues.
Guiding principles for ASEN role implementation

The guiding principles have been developed to assist Nursing and Midwifery (N&M) leaders in the process of planning, determination and implementation of the ASEN role across SA Health sites.

The following four stages contribute to the successful implementation of the ASEN role:

- **Initiation** – ‘Establish the need’
- Strategic Service Planning; Implementation
- Evaluation
- A commitment to lifelong learning and inquiry.

This Toolkit aims to provide practical information to promote consistency and role clarity. The ASEN role will contribute to the service model of care that has been aligned to strategic national and state priorities as well as supporting new workforce and health reform models for healthcare service development.

Specifically, an ASEN position may be established where:

- A gap in service provision has been identified by a LHN (health service/unit)
- The position will contribute to the efficiency of service delivery.

**Stage 1 – Initiation ‘Establish the need’**

**Principle 1**

The N&M leaders are responsible for aligning service planning to the strategic direction of health reform in South Australia. The N&M leaders are responsible for identifying and facilitating the introduction of the ASEN role in line with identified service needs. In developing the service plan, N&M leaders need to be aware of the requirement of the ASEN role to maintain a relationship with Registered Nurses/Midwives for supervision and collaboration.

Nursing and Midwifery leaders are responsible for identifying areas for development of ASEN roles. In undertaking the analysis, focus should be on workforce planning requirements to meet current and future service needs. In doing this, N&M leaders should give consideration to EN positions whose responsibilities may have expanded over time and determine whether the role should be an ASEN in line with service requirements.

**Principle 2**

A business case proposal is required for additional FTE if the ASEN position is in addition to the established staffing model. In these cases, the relevant business case template must be completed as per LHN procedures.

**Principle 3**

The Scope of Practice of the ASEN role is determined by the context in which the Enrolled Nurse is authorised to practice. N&M leaders are to identify areas in which an ASEN role can practice to their full scope.

**Principle 4**

Workforce planning is the mechanism to be used in identifying where and when positions are available as determined by the LHN (health service/unit).
Guiding principles for ASEN role implementation – contd.

Stage 2 – Planning

Principle 5
It is important that there is an agreed, consistent and transparent process across SA Health to establish the ASEN role in the health service/unit.

N&M leaders are responsible for ensuring the ASEN role is considered for inclusion when the models of care and new services are planned. Service planning elements include, but not limited to, the following:

- Identifying organisational aims, objectives, strategic direction and service delivery priorities
- Access to professional and competency guidelines and standards relevant to the ASEN role
- Considering all vacancies as providing an opportunity to consider the ASEN role in staff models and mix
- Meeting skill mix requirements as per the Nursing and Midwifery (South Australian Public Sector) Enterprise Agreement 2013.

Strategic service planning ensures adequate preparation for the appointment of the ASEN position. Please refer to the Strategic service planning diagram Appendix 1 (page 12), and the Strategic Service Planning Template ASEN position.

Principle 6
The cost effectiveness of the role should be considered. Staffing models and skill mix should be reviewed to consider the ASEN role. All nurse vacancies provide an opportunity to consider the ASEN role, with the opportunity to explore ASEN roles proposed by the LHN (health service/unit).

Principle 7
LHN (health services/units) will develop strategies to achieve implementation of the identified ASEN positions within the agreed timelines as indicated on the Strategic Service Planning Template ASEN position.

Principle 8
LHN (health services/units) should clearly identify the advanced scope of practice of the ASEN prior to implementation through the:

- Development of a job description
- Facilitation of practice standards
- Updating of LHN (health services/units) policies/procedures where required to support the practice of the ASEN role.

Principle 9
The ASENs scope of practice is influenced by the:

- Context of the practice setting
- Level of competence, education, qualifications and experience required for the role
- LHN (health service/unit) policy, quality and risk management framework and organisational culture.
Guiding principles for ASEN role implementation – contd.

N&M leaders are responsible for ensuring the nursing and midwifery workforce at all levels have a clear understanding of:

- The Enrolled Nurses Scope of Practice including the extension of that scope to advanced skills level
- The way in which the ASEN should operate in the LHN (health service/unit).

Stage 3 – Implementation

Principle 10

It is essential that the LHN (health services/units), through the N&M leaders, consider the impact of the role introduction on the broader workforce (including but not limited to the nursing/midwifery workforce) as any new roles and/or new practice models under consideration cannot be implemented in isolation.

N&M leaders should clearly and consistently communicate the ASEN:

- Role definitions
- Working relationships
- Decision making tools to assist in role implementation

N&M leaders are responsible for the review of existing procedures to align with the implementation of the ASEN role in the LHN (health service/units).

Principle 12

N&M leaders are responsible for the development, education and communication strategies for the existing workforce in relation to implementing the advanced skills and scope into practice of the ASEN.

Principle 13

The advertising of positions in SA Health is in accordance with the LHN human resource procedures.

Stage 4 – Evaluation

Principle 14

N&M leaders are responsible for initial evaluation of the implementation of the ASEN role (refer to Strategic Service Planning Template ASEN position). This should focus on issues and processes pertaining to:

- The workforce planning identified in the Template
- Achievement of the number of ASEN roles which support the service plan
- Whether the positions were identified for immediate introduction at the time of implementation, or identified need and/or identified for introduction as positions are available through natural attrition
- Achievement of timeframes for implementation of the ASEN role
- The cost effectiveness of the role
- Impact evaluations, clinical effectiveness and acceptance of the role.
Guiding principles for ASEN role implementation – contd.

Summary
The documented aims and principles are a guide for N&M leaders on the requirements in relation to the implementation and support for the integration of the ASEN role into SA Health nursing and midwifery workforce.

Governance
To establish and maintain the governance required for the ASEN role across SA Health, LHNs through the Executive and Directors/Division Directors of Nursing and Midwifery are responsible for all the processes outlined in the guiding principles and toolkit.

Domains of ASEN practice
There are a variety of clinical settings in which the ASEN roles would be able to effectively contribute to service delivery and thereby meet organisational need. The factors that enable successful implementation of the ASEN role in a service/area include:

> Establish clear systems for appropriate delegation and supervision for Enrolled Nurse practice including that of the ASEN
> Recognise the competencies of an ASEN
> Awareness of artificial limitations placed on the scope of practice of Enrolled Nurses in the clinical setting.
> Additionally the following NMBA documents should be consulted:
  > Decision-making framework
  > Nursing practice decisions summary guide
  > Nursing practice decision flowchart
  > Code of professional conduct for nurses in Australia
  > Code of ethics for nurses in Australia
  > Professional boundaries for nurses in Australia

The ASEN role is defined in the Nursing/Midwifery (South Australian Public Sector) Enterprise Agreement as an Enrolled Nurse who demonstrates advanced skills and knowledge within each of the following three domains:

> Client/patient assessment
> Care management
> Leadership responsibilities

These three domains do not imply the ASEN is able to take sole responsibility and accountability. However the ASEN contributes at a level commensurate with the advanced skills and knowledge requirements of the role, in collaboration and consultation with a Registered Nurse/Midwife. The ASEN supports the Registered Nurse/Midwife in the provision of person centred care. Employees at this level work under the direction and supervision of the Registered Nurse/Midwife. However at all times, the ASEN retains responsibility for their actions while remaining accountable to the Registered Nurse/Midwife for all delegated functions. The principles of delegation, decision making and supervision remain in accordance with Enrolled Nursing practice.

Advanced Skills and knowledge in client/patient assessment
In addition to the Enrolled Nurse role, the ASEN is able to:
> Contribute to client/patient assessment by using advanced skills and knowledge to produce a holistic assessment

> Contribute to determining the health status and nursing needs of a client/patient in consultation/collaboration with a Registered Nurse/Midwife and the health care team.
Domains of ASEN practice – contd.

The ASEN is able to formulate (in collaboration with the Registered Nurse/ Midwife) appropriate care plans within their scope of practice, discussing assessment data with the Registered Nurse/Midwife and health care team. The ASEN contributes to nursing/midwifery care delivery, using their advanced knowledge and skills and understanding of best practice.

Advanced Skills and knowledge in the provision of care management

In addition to the Enrolled Nurse role, the ASEN is able to contribute to care management and planning using their advanced skills and knowledge.

The ASEN collaborates with Registered Nurses/Midwives and liaises with other members of the health care team regarding alterations in conditions of the client/patient. Examples of practices that the ASEN may contribute to include:

- Assist the client/patient in discharge preparation
- Ongoing assessment of individual needs
- Delivery ongoing education and support for the client/patient and their significant others.

The ASEN implements best practice nursing interventions for the client/patient in consultation/ collaboration with the Registered Nurse/Midwife and health care team. They are able to perform more complex clinical and nursing interventions as delegated by the Registered Nurse/Midwife and supported by local policies and procedures to assist the client/patient to attain and maintain optimal health.

The ASEN in consultation/collaboration with a Registered Nurse/Midwife is able to prioritise, plan and implement nursing interventions for the client/patient according to the individual’s needs and to re-prioritise, as required, to address changes in the client’s/patient’s condition and/or in nursing/midwifery workload.

The ASEN is able to recognise alterations in psychological and physiological status, respond appropriately and promptly, and report to a Registered Nurse/Midwife and the health care team as appropriate. For example the ASEN using their decision making skills within their scope of practice and delegated responsibility, is able to identify the deteriorating client/patient, implement interventions as supported by local policies and procedures and evaluate outcomes for clients/patients and others.

The ASEN is able to perform nursing interventions utilising evidence based practice. This may include the use of more complex client/patient monitoring systems. The ASEN is able to modify interventions in consultation/collaboration with the Registered Nurse/Midwife in line with organisational policies/procedures/guidelines and evidence based practice that supports the role. Documentation of the evaluation of outcomes will be in line with organisation policies/procedures.

In relevant practice settings, the ASEN uses their knowledge of principles of drug actions and side effects, in accordance with organisational policies, procedures and relevant legislation.

The ASEN uses their advanced skills and knowledge to effectively assist in the patient/client journey across the continuum of care. For example, the ASEN working in patient journey roles, in collaboration/consultation with the Registered Nurse/Midwife, is able to establish links and form partnerships between the acute sector and other health service providers and put into place strategies to improve the client’s/patient’s journey to avert further hospital admissions.
Domains of ASEN practice – contd.

Advanced Skills and knowledge in leadership responsibilities

In addition to the Enrolled Nurse role, the ASEN has an increased level of knowledge and understanding of how research can be applied to nursing practice within the scope of the Enrolled Nurse.

The ASEN demonstrates a greater depth of knowledge and skills in a speciality area with more effective integration of theory and practice than the Enrolled Nurse and is able to apply this to their leadership responsibilities. The ASEN is able to undertake additional leadership responsibilities using their advanced skills and knowledge, but is not limited to:

- Contribute to and support team leadership roles, educate others, provide mentorship and preceptorship for others, thereby acting as a resource to others in clinical practice
- Contribute to the performance appraisal of others
- Be actively involved within the professional committees and working parties within and beyond the work unit.

ASEN links to Performance review and Development and the Nursing and Midwifery Capability and Self Development Framework

The Nursing and Midwifery Capability and Self Development Framework establishes the processes and systems used by health services and the nursing and midwifery workforce in developing knowledge, skills and competencies that will meet the needs of clients/patients now and in the future.

The Nursing and Midwifery Capability and Self-Development Framework can be used to guide Enrolled Nurses and ASEN’s on how to continue their professional development within the context of lifelong learning. The Framework can provide direction and supporting structures to enable the planning and implementation for the Enrolled Nurse professional development opportunities for career enhancement, and encouragement for individual Enrolled Nurses to:

- Be active in career development
- Plan lifelong learning activities
- Undertake self-reflection
- Utilise regular practice/performance assessment to identify areas for self-development and professional growth.

Managers are responsible for assisting Enrolled Nurses to identify development opportunities in line with individual and organisational goals. Planning of learning and development activities are undertaken as part of the performance review and development (PR&D) process.
Advanced Skills Enrolled Nurse (ASEN) links to PR&D and the Nursing and Midwifery Capability and Self Development Framework

Enrolled Nurse registered with the NMBA

The LHN (health service/unit) determines through workforce planning or redesign that an Advanced Skills Enrolled Nurse role would be well positioned to meet client/patient needs and service direction.

The Enrolled Nurse as a part of his/her ongoing PR&D, linked to the Nursing and Midwifery Capability and Self Development Framework of the LHN (health service/unit) identifies areas of development that are aligned to service need and individual aspirations in working towards an advanced enrolled nursing role.

The Enrolled Nurse specialises in an area of practice and works towards developing advanced knowledge and skills.

The ASEN

The Advanced Skills Enrolled Nurse will either:

- Hold an Advanced Diploma of Enrolled Nursing and have three years full time equivalent experience in the relevant clinical area;
- OR
- Have five years full time equivalent experience in the relevant clinical area and have demonstrated advanced skills and knowledge in client assessment, care management and leadership responsibilities.

Recruitment to the ASEN position using a merit based selection process.
Appendix 1:
Example 1 – Strategic Service Planning Diagram

Stage 1: Initiation ‘Establish the Need’
- Identify areas of priority for the ASEN role.
- Build the Business Case.
- Identify opportunities for developing the scope of ASEN practice in line with service need.
- Commence workforce planning for a merit based selection process.

Stage 2: Planning
- Determine workforce and strategic plans.
- Identify and confirm infrastructure and support.
- Commence Strategic Service Planning Template.
- Develop J&PS.
- Ensure clear understanding of EN and ASEN scope of practice.

Stage 3: Implementation
Communication with all levels of Nursing and Midwifery:
- Role definitions
- Working relationships
- Decision-making tools

Stage 4: Evaluation
Outcomes to workforce planning:
- Roles available
- Planning for future roles/models
- Time
- Cost effectiveness

ASEN role and scope of practice
LHN’s encourage the use of the ASEN work level descriptors, competencies, standards of care and broadened scope of practice for the role.
References


4. Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (2002). National competency standards for the enrolled nurse


For more information

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