Introduction

The National Wound Care Strategy Programme (NWCSP) argued that there are many unwarranted variations in wound care services across the United Kingdom (UK), which impact healing rates and increase patients suffering. They highlight the need to reduce spending on inappropriate and ineffective treatments by ensuring patients have access to evidence-based care (NWCSP, 2020), which can only be achieved if staff have access to education and are able to develop their skill set. The NWCSP commissioned the development of a 'core capabilities framework for health and care staff involved in wound care in England'. The Tissue Viability Leading Change (TVLC) Framework, originally developed in 2016, aimed to reduce inequities in tissue viability education and to provide a minimum set of outcomes for professionals working in healthcare environments to develop their knowledge and skills. In line with the NWCSP framework, the TVLC Framework was updated in 2022 and further developed to be accessed and used on an online platform. Delivery through an online platform allows the user to create a bespoke package of learning that meets the needs of the individual and permits the production of audit reports of practice. These audits can include reports highlighting which professionals and bands of staff have completed some or all of the TVLC Online Capability Framework. This provides assurances to healthcare providers that education is being maintained, staff are updated and capable of caring for patients with wounds.

What is the TVLC Online Capability Framework?

The TVLC Online Capability Framework is designed to be used by any healthcare professional who cares for individuals with wounds and compromised skin integrity. It provides a framework to assist healthcare professionals, and those aspiring to work in tissue viability or wound care in the UK to understand the skills and knowledge required in this specialist area of care. The term 'capability' has been used throughout, to allow the user to demonstrate the attributes (skills, knowledge, and behaviours) they bring to the workplace. This includes the ability to be competent and beyond this, to manage change, be flexible, deal with situations which are unpredictable and continue to improve performance as defined by Skills for Health (2021).

The capabilities

The TVLC Online Capability Framework is designed to be a bespoke package for users to enhance learning, development and advanced capability. The TVLC Online Capability Framework presents the core capabilities expected of practitioners working within tissue viability or wound care. There are 13 capabilities that represent the diverse and complex nature of tissue viability or wound care (Table 1).

Table 1. The 13 capabilities	
Capability	
1	Generic
2	Health improvement
3	Pressure ulcer prevention and management
4	Wound care
5	Lower limb ulceration
6	Dermatology
7	Pharmacotherapy
8	Research utilisation and audit
9	Safeguarding
10	Leadership, management, and teamwork
11	Surgical site infection
12	Foot ulceration
13	Self-supported management

Individualising the TVLC Online Capability Framework

One of the great advantages of the TVLC Online Capability Framework is the ability to individualise specific capabilities according to the individual practitioner, the local service, or the wider health system requirements. Which capabilities to include and what level of capability required is adaptable. There is no expectation that users will complete all capabilities: the user will define which capabilities are required to be completed; for example, lower limb and foot ulceration may be prioritised in a lower limb clinic, supplemented with the generic capability. Each section is divided into 'bite-size' chunks allowing the user time to develop their knowledge and skills. The capabilities are detailed to provide the user with specific directives (e.g. is able to assess condition of skin and nails on feet).

No formal timeframes are allocated to completion of each capability; this should be discussed at the local level. It is hoped that the TVLC Online Capability framework becomes

embedded within local appraisal processes and evolves with the practitioner. Due to its portability, it can be thought of as a career-long capability passport. Completion of the framework can be used as evidence of professional development for re-registration purposes.

Each capability has four levels reflecting the complexity of care interventions (Figure 1). These are presented as A–D: it is assumed that level A is aimed at unregistered staff, or to provide an initial foundation for all those providing care for patients with wounds, while levels B–D are for registered staff progressing through their career and developing their expertise.
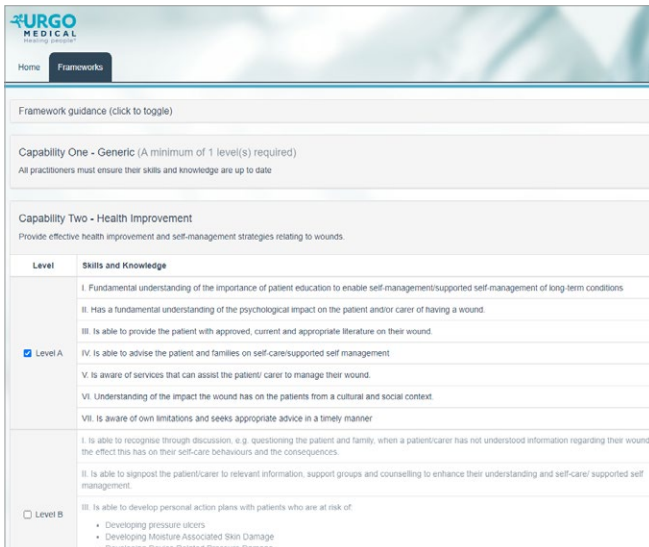

Figure 1. Example of a Capability

Mentorship

The TVLC Online Capability framework can be used by a sole practitioner as an individualised learning guide; this can help enthusiastic healthcare professionals think about where they should be expanding their skills and knowledge to reach the next level. It is hoped that providing this structure of education levels will help practitioners to continually grow their own individual practice and passion for tissue viability. The framework can also be used in conjunction with a mentor, allowing the organisation to assess and ensure individuals' level of practice. A mentor should be a professional of a higher band to act as a guide to aid the development of skills and knowledge. If the user is of specialist or consultant level, a mentor may need to be identified from another healthcare environment. The mentor will possess knowledge and skills in tissue viability and be able to support the user through the process of completing the outcomes. Each local area will have guidance on choosing a mentor and this should be referred to. Time spent with the mentor is individual to each

user accessing the framework. It is recommended that the user liaises with their mentor, as a minimum, monthly. This promotes discussion and exploration of progression of each outcome and a discussion surrounding evidence generated to support the outcomes. Figure 2 presents a mentor view of the framework.

Figure 2. Mentor view of the framework

Following identification of a mentor, the user should complete a self-assessment to ascertain which capability level they perceive they are currently working at. This will then be discussed and agreed upon with the mentor. Assessing these levels allows for the user and mentor to identify appropriate learning needs to meet the outcomes. The mentor and user will agree on which capability level should be documented and will explore if the user should be progressing to a higher capability, known as a development goal.

Assessing capability level

The TVLC Online Capability Framework allows for the current level of capability to be assessed (please note user's level may be different for each capability). There are five levels, which are ascending in knowledge and skills (Table 2).

Table 2: Capability levels	
Capability	
1	Observed the skill/procedure in a practice setting
2	Participated in the skill/procedure under direct supervision
3	Performed the skill/procedure on a number of occasions and required minimal supervision
4	Perform the skill/procedure safely and capably, giving a rationale for your actions
5	Critically appraise/teach the skill/procedure to others

It is important that the user and mentor agree on which capabilities are appropriate to the local service and job role to allow relevant action plans to be developed to meet the outcomes. After this discussion, it may be necessary to develop personal development or action plans; generic documents have been provided for this.

As the user works their way through the framework, there is an expectation that evidence will be added to the document, demonstrating successful achievement of each capability for the level deemed appropriate to the user. This should be in keeping with the local service specification and job descriptions. The capabilities are not presented as a hierarchy, nor are they progressive.

Evidence can be provided in a range of ways, which include: self-assessment; peer review; observation of practice (for example, assessing a wound bed and planning evidence-based interventions); reflection on prior knowledge and skills; reflections following an educational event. Evidence generated should be uploaded to the portfolio (Figure 3 shows an example of a reflection).

Figure 3. Example of a reflection

Please note, any evidence provided should support the capabilities, be relevant and in general achieved within the previous 5 years. Figure 4 presents an example of the framework, showing the capability level, development goal and evidence tabs. All evidence is submitted through the online platform, allowing the mentor the ability to review and discuss with the user. Evidence can be updated as required.

Figure 4. Framework example

Organisational assurance

The TVLC Online Capability framework offers a unique system of providing organisations the assurance that staff hold the appropriate skills and knowledge to complete their roles effectively. It allows local teams to document the level of staff education, to benchmark against required local standards and to assess for improvement in the level of skills and

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knowledge, not only within a specific team but also the wider organisation. This can be of huge benefit when considering the implementation of 'lessons learnt' from incident reporting; the TLVC Online Capability Framework can provide that much-needed confidence that messages have been disseminated and that there has been an improvement in skills and knowledge of a specific area (e.g. pressure ulcer prevention awareness).

How to access the framework

On accessing the framework, the user will need to accept the terms and conditions (Figure 5). The TVLC Online Capability Framework is available free to use for clinicians and organisations working in partnership with Urgo Medical. To release the full benefits of the TVLC Online Capability Framework, it is important that the framework is implemented in a structured way. Urgo Medical can help support organisational implementation plans, advise on roll-out, provide hands-on education on how to access and use the platform, and also provide information on how to run service reports for clinical managers. Urgo Medical have a range of education including CPD-accredited modules to support organisations with development of capability. Please contact your local Urgo representative for further information.
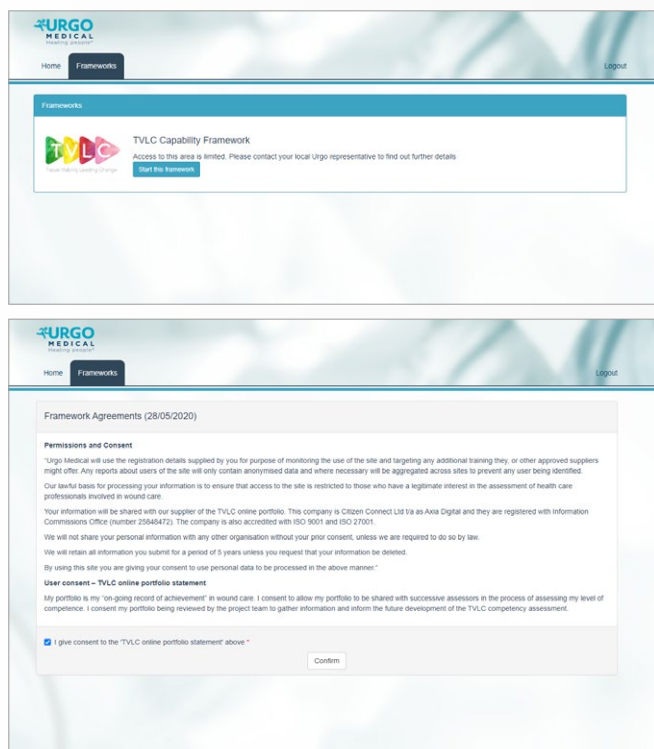

Figure 5. TVLC Online Capability Framework terms and conditions

Summary

The TVLC Online Capability Framework provides a framework for staff to develop their knowledge and skills in tissue viability in a structured format. It gives organisations the ability to audit staff education by providing them with a tool to identify gaps in knowledge. Through the development of action plans and self-assessment, users can easily highlight their own learning needs to ultimately reduce unwarranted variations in care. Clinicians can download proof of capability progression by means of an individualised passport which they can keep for their records and revalidation.

Development of action plans

Following discussion of self assessment

Completion of reflection

This follows completion of some or all the capabilities to evidence development and learning

Can use to support revalidation activities

For example NMC/HCPC

References

NWCSP (2020) Lower limb recommendations. National Wound Care Strategy Programme

Skills for Health (2021) National Wound Care Core Capabilities Framework for England. Available at: https://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Wound-Care-Framework-2021.pdf (accessed 12.10.2022)