

# UKONS Acute Oncology Knowledge and Skills Framework with Competence Passport User Guide

The development of Version 1 of the Framework (October 2018) was led by Philippa Jones, UK Acute Oncology Society. Version 2 of the framework includes updates following the development of the Acute Oncology Competence Assessment Passports. All Contributors to both Version 1 and Version 2 are listed in Appendix 1 of this document.

### **Acknowledgements**

Thanks to the Anglia Cancer Network for providing permission for the Competencies Framework for the Acute Oncology Service (AOS) Clinical Nurse Specialist Role to be adapted for Version 1.

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Thanks to all organisations who have participated in the CASCADE project pilot; a full list of these organisations can be found within Appendix 2 of this document.

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### **Disclaimer**

The information contained in this framework comes from nationwide consultation. The framework should be used in conjunction with relevant local policies / procedures / guidelines and should be approved for use according to each organisation's clinical governance process. Care has been taken in the preparation of the information contained in this document. The authors make no representation or guarantee of any kind whatsoever regarding the content or its use or application and disclaim any responsibility for its use or application in any way.

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To provide feedback on this document or for any enquiries please contact the UKONS AO members interest group committee via [ukons@media1productions.co.uk](mailto:ukons@media1productions.co.uk).

A series of links that learners may find useful have been collated into the QR code:



# Foreword

**The UK Oncology Nursing Society (UKONS) are delighted to publish Version 2 of the UKONS Acute Oncology Knowledge and Skills Framework with Competence Passport User Guide (formerly the UKONS Acute Oncology Knowledge and Skills Guidance).**

Acute Oncology (AO) services aim to increase urgent access for patients with suspected oncological emergencies and reduce the length of time patients spend in hospital by streamlining care. Education and training to develop specialist acute oncology knowledge and skills across the workforce is needed to improve the outcomes and experiences of people with cancer.

AO services are broad; they include designated AO units, Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC) units, Accident and Emergency departments, inpatient oncology and haematology services, specialist palliative care, primary care and connect with other specialist services to manage patients who have symptoms from their disease and/or treatment.

This Framework describes four Levels of Practice and lists competences to standardise practice at each level. It also includes guidance on the use of the Acute Oncology Competence Assessment Passports, which are fully aligned to the NHS England Aspirant Cancer Career and Education Development (ACCEND) Capability Framework.

Together this suite of documents aims to standardise AO education, training and competence assessment to ensure good delivery of high-quality care to people with cancer.

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**Dr Karen Campbell**

UKONS President

October 2024

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# 1. Introduction

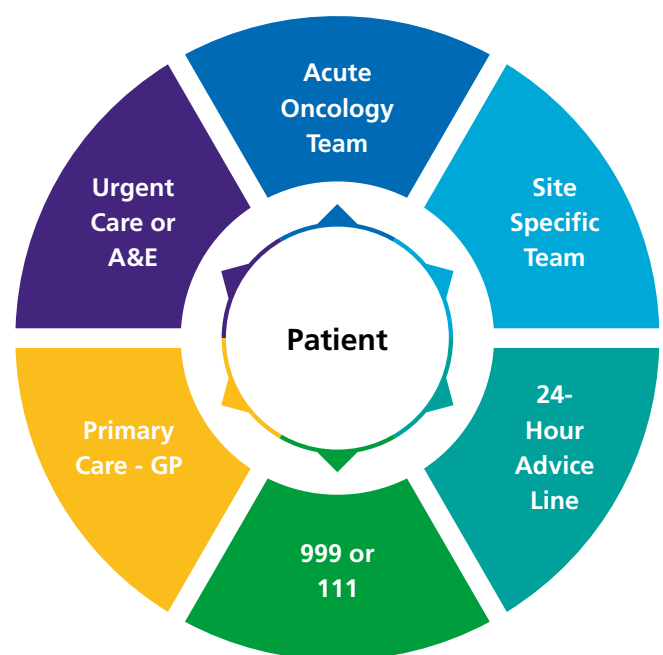
**Acute oncology services aim to improve the quality of care provided to the following groups of patients:**

- Acutely unwell adult patients who present as an emergency and have a suspected new diagnosis of cancer
- Acutely unwell adult patients who are currently receiving Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy (SACT\*) and/or radiotherapy, or who have recently completed treatment
- Acutely unwell adult patients who have a known cancer diagnosis and have symptoms which are indicative of acute complications of cancer.

\* The term SACT includes: cytotoxic drugs, small molecule inhibitors, monoclonal antibodies and cellular therapies. Note these drug classifications include both cytostatic drugs and immunotherapy.

Acute oncology services (AOS), although a relatively new clinical specialty, are integral to improving outcomes for people living with or beyond cancer. Whether this is at diagnosis - approximately one third of cancers are diagnosed as an emergency presentation across the UK (McPhail et al., 2022) - or from complications during their treatment or their cancer, delayed recognition of oncology emergencies can increase patient morbidity and mortality.

Patients with cancer who have acute presentations have a higher susceptibility to complications than patients without a cancer diagnosis. Therefore, it is important to ensure that robust AO competences are in place to optimise outcomes and experiences for patients with cancer. Patients have interactions with many different individuals throughout their treatment pathway, so it is important to recognise that AO knowledge and skills are relevant to everyone's role to make every contact count. If your role, therefore, involves interaction with a patient presenting with a possible oncological emergency, then demonstration of competence in AO is appropriate for your role.



**Figure 1.** Patient care at the centre of AO multidisciplinary working across service networks

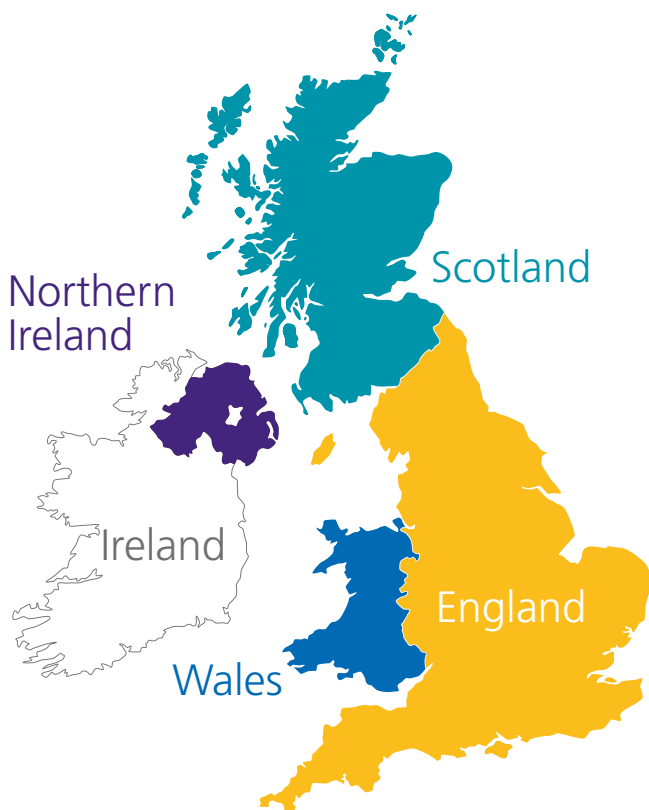
By spanning four Levels of Practice (including a range of roles and health professional groups), this Framework aims to support the development of a knowledgeable, skilled, and competent workforce that treat and care for patients with an acute oncology indication. This links to NHS England's Workforce Training and Education Directorate (formerly Health Education England) goals within the Cancer Workforce plan focussing on prevention, earlier diagnosis, better treatment and living with cancer: [www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/cancer-workforce-plan](http://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/cancer-workforce-plan)

This Framework aligns with the [NHS England Aspirant Career and Education Development \(ACCEND\) Capability Framework \(2023\)](#) for all staff outside of medicine who work in cancer care, full details of this mapping can be downloaded from [ukons.org/resources/aos-passport-resources/](http://ukons.org/resources/aos-passport-resources/) The Framework can also be used in conjunction with competency frameworks from Royal Colleges.

## 2. Acute oncology services across the four nations

Patients who require urgent or emergency oncology treatment and care should receive the same standard of evidence-based care according to nationally-accepted guidelines in all regions; however, there are differences in how these services are delivered across the four nations of the UK. The map below highlights how people with oncological emergencies are managed regionally.

### A four-nations approach to education, training and assessment:



**Figure 2.**  
Four Nations map of the UK

A coordinated approach to cancer strategies and workforce planning guidance are in place across each of the four nations of the UK:

- [Cancer Action Plan for Scotland](#)
- [A Cancer Strategy for Northern Ireland 2022-2032](#)
- [A Cancer Improvement for NHS Wales](#)
- [NHS England. The NHS Long Term Plan](#)

For further links and resources please see pages 32-33

### Scotland

In Scotland there are 14 NHS Health Boards and three cancer networks: West of Scotland Cancer Network (WoSCAN), North (NOSCAN) and South East (SCAN) Cancer Networks. Linked to these, are three Managed Clinical Networks (MCNs) which support patients diagnosed with sarcoma, hepatopancreatobiliary and brain/central nervous system cancers. Regional cancer centres have their own Cancer Treatment Helpline (CTH). These CTHs generally run during the day from 08:00 until 20:00 with out of hours or coverage during busy periods diverting to NHS24/111. The national line then notifies regional CTHs with call details to ensure continuity of care with local oncology teams.

### Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland each of the 5 Trusts have established their own AO service. Regional policies to support these services have been developed by the Northern Ireland AO Clinical Reference Group and the regional AO nursing forum. Each team is varied and has input from Consultant Oncologists, Specialty Doctors, Advanced Clinical Practitioners and Clinical Nurse Specialists. A 24-hour helpline is provided at each centre by SACT trained nurses.

### Wales

Each Health Board has local plans that govern a core AO team, and this team provides a physical presence in each site with an acute medical intake- usually an AO specialist nurse. There are seven health boards throughout Wales.

### England

Each acute NHS hospital trust is required to have an AO service, there is also an expectation that cancer centres without A&E departments will also provide an AOS for their patient population. Across England there are 21 Cancer Alliances with some leading a regionally coordinated approach to AOS via established AO expert reference groups.

# 3. The Knowledge and Skills Framework

This Framework describes the four Levels of role-specific knowledge and skills for general / non- specialist and specialist healthcare workers involved in the care of people affected by cancer who may be experiencing acute problems related to their cancer or the treatment they are receiving. The Levels of knowledge and skills for the competences are the same as the Levels of Practice in the Acute Oncology Competence Assessment Passports.



**Figure 3.**

The Four Levels of the Acute Oncology Knowledge and Skills Competence – Levels of Practice

## AO Levels of Practice to support career progression

The Acute Oncology Patient Pathway begins at the first presentation to a healthcare worker for the episode of care. This framework spans Primary, Urgent and Acute Care Providers, and describes the level of knowledge and skill required by healthcare staff dependent on their role in the patient pathway. For example, a Community Primary Care Nurse would need to be able to initiate the required emergency management to support the patient and liaise with Acute Oncology Services for further guidance; this equates to Level 1 (Core).

Level 1 can also be applied to pre-registration students and/or apprentices, and registered staff outside of cancer care settings. For the supportive and assistive workforce who work in an AO specific role, it may also be suitable for learners to progress from completing Level 1 on induction and moving to Level 2 as they become more experienced within their support role in the AO team. Learners who feel that this progression is within their scope of practice should discuss their learning goals with their manager and assessor and identify which competencies are applicable.

Level 2 (Intermediate) includes registered healthcare professionals who provide cancer care as part of their usual roles, for example, staff in emergency, urgent care and acute medical settings or within cancer care setting that are not AOS. Staff might progress from Level 2 to Level 3, such as foundation level doctors to specialist oncology training posts or where staff are progressing from roles outside of the AOS, for example; acute medicine, to AO specific services.

Staff completing Level 3 (Advanced) are registered healthcare professionals who have a regular, active participatory role in the provision of AOS. Experienced AO clinicians may progress from Level 3 to Level 4 as their scope of practice expands, for example, an AO CNS in a team leader position progressing to an advanced practice role.

Staff practicing at Level 4 (Expert) are registered healthcare professionals who are responsible for acute oncology service development / management / clinical leadership. Continuing professional development within AO leadership roles can be evidenced within the Level 4 Passport during annual re-accreditation.

The four levels of knowledge and skills described above align to the Levels of Practice in the ACCEND Capability Framework, as shown in the Table 1 below. Learning outcomes evidenced by completing the AO Competence Assessment Passports are in alignment with all ACCEND domains and all Capabilities in Practice, with the exception of Capability 16 'Pre-habilitation and Rehabilitation Interventions'. A detailed mapping exercise has been undertaken and this document is available via the UKONS website.

UKONS Acute Oncology Knowledge and Skills Framework	ACCEND (Aspirant Cancer Career and Education Development) Framework (2023)
<b>Level 1 – Core</b>	Supportive, Assistive and Pre-registration
<b>Level 2 – Intermediate</b>	Registrant and Enhanced
<b>Level 3 – Advanced</b>	Enhanced to Advanced and Advanced
<b>Level 4 – Expert</b>	Advanced to Consultant/Senior Leader and Consultant/Senior Leader

**Table 1.**  
Alignment of AO levels of knowledge and skills to ACCEND levels of practice.

The AO passports can be used to evidence capability within other frameworks, namely the non-surgical oncology advanced practice credential. This credential is designed to inform education and training providers in the development of level seven programmes and modules to support the development of practitioners working, or training at an advanced level of practice in non-surgical oncology. Further information on the credential will be available at [advanced-practice.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/credentials/endorsed-credentials/](https://advanced-practice.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/credentials/endorsed-credentials/) when endorsed. For further information please contact UKONS via [ukons@media1productions.co.uk](mailto:ukons@media1productions.co.uk)

UKONS and UKAOS are working in collaboration to develop further multi-disciplinary mapping of the Acute Oncology Knowledge and Skills Framework and the AO Passports to frameworks and curricula for other professional groups, linking in with royal colleges and national oncology education leads.



# Level 1 – Core Knowledge and Skills

This Section describes the learners and learning outcomes and also includes the table of competence for foundation-level knowledge and skills for people working in non-cancer specialist healthcare who may be involved in the care of patients with an AO indication.

## Applicable to

All healthcare professionals working in non-oncology specialist areas that accept, assess and/or admit acutely unwell patients and Registered healthcare professionals working in cancer care who may be newly qualified or recently transitioned to working in oncology services. For example:

- Administrative personnel who have regular patient contact, e.g. medical secretaries
- Supportive and Assistive workforce roles caring for patients with cancer, e.g. Cancer Care Coordinators, Pathway Navigators, Phlebotomists, Clinical Support Workers, Healthcare Assistants
- Students of all healthcare professional groups: Nursing / Medicine / Allied Healthcare Professions / Pharmacy / Trainee Nurse Associates / Healthcare Scientists
- Ambulance patient carers / handlers
- NHS111, 999 or charity helpline call handlers
- Community / Primary Care Nurses, and Healthcare Support Teams
- General Practice Teams
- Hospital and Community Allied Health Professionals
- Non-oncology Clinical Nurse Specialists (e.g. Diabetes Clinical Nurse Specialists)
- Diagnostic Radiographers
- Healthcare Scientists
- Hospital and Community Pharmacists, Pharmacy Technicians and Assistants

## Learning Outcomes

At Level 1, staff should be able to demonstrate an:

- Understanding of the principles of acute oncology
- Ability to recognise patients with cancer who are acutely unwell
- Understanding of the importance of urgent intervention to get the best outcomes for patients with acute complications of cancer and/or cancer treatments
- Awareness of how and when to contact the local Acute Oncology Service and have an understanding of the service they provide
- Ability to refer to and communicate with the hospital Acute Oncology Service in a timely manner.

## Level 1 – Core Knowledge and Skills

Competence	Requisite knowledge and skills
<b>A. The Hospital Acute Oncology Service</b>	
<b>Demonstrate an understanding of the relevant hospital's Acute Oncology Services and their role within the Acute Care Pathway</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who the acute oncology team are</li> <li>• Appropriate client / patient groups</li> <li>• Accessible acute oncology teams within the region</li> </ul>
<b>How would you contact the local Acute Oncology Service?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Telephone number</li> <li>• Email address</li> <li>• Bleep/pager number</li> <li>• Where these details can be found</li> </ul>
<b>B. The 24/7 Acute Oncology Advice Service</b>	
<b>Demonstrate an understanding of the 24/7 Patient Advice Line service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The advice line number</li> <li>• Appropriate client / patient groups, e.g. for patients that have received anti-cancer treatment or radiotherapy</li> <li>• How and when to direct patients to this service</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate knowledge of the 24/7 Consultant Oncologist On Call Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to access this service, e.g. contact pathways and presentations</li> <li>• Appropriate client / patient groups, e.g. for healthcare professionals to access urgent advice regarding patient management</li> <li>• When to contact this service</li> </ul>
<b>C. Acute Oncology Guidelines and Pathways</b>	
<b>Demonstrate knowledge of the relevant hospital's Acute Oncology Guidelines and content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How Acute Oncology Guidelines would be accessed, e.g. the organisation's website / intranet / resource folders</li> <li>• Overview of potential acute oncology problems / presentations</li> <li>• Tools that can be used to assess patient risk, e.g. UKONS Primary Care Risk Assessment Tool and patient-held alert cards</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate knowledge of the spinal metastases and Metastatic Spinal Cord Compression Pathway (MSCC) Pathways</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of 'Red Flags' and use of patient alert cards</li> <li>• The pathway and process for urgent referral</li> <li>• Awareness of the initial care and management of patients with suspected spinal metastases or MSCC, e.g. spinal stability and safety</li> </ul>

## Level 1 – Core Knowledge and Skills (Continued)

Competence	Requisite knowledge and skills
<b>C. Acute Oncology Guidelines and Pathways</b>	
<b>Demonstrate knowledge of the Suspected (Neutropenic) Sepsis Care Pathway</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of the sepsis patient risk tools that can be used to assess patient risk e.g. UKONS Primary Care Risk Assessment Tool and patient alert cards</li> <li>• Recognition of significant signs and symptoms that should prompt urgent referral</li> <li>• Urgent care pathway, e.g. 999</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate an awareness of other acute oncology indications and the ability to identify common patient presentations of symptoms with acute cancer or cancer treatment complications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of the different categories of acute oncology presentations</li> <li>• Ability to take appropriate action within scope of practice after recognition of potential emergency symptoms</li> <li>• Awareness of signs and symptoms of novel SACT toxicities, and the importance of early recognition and referral, e.g. immunotherapy side effects</li> </ul>
<b>D. Communication and Documentation</b>	
<b>Demonstrate importance of communicating a patient's presentation and/or admission</b>	<p>Recognition of the role of communication in a safe and efficient patient care pathway. Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A description of the appropriate communication pathway</li> <li>• List who should be contacted if applicable.</li> <li>• Provide supportive information and signposting for people living with cancer within your sphere of responsibility</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate importance of comprehensive documentation and reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition of the importance of correct documentation, e.g. legal and professional responsibilities</li> </ul>

### Assessment

Evidence of achievement of competency will be demonstrated by completion of the Level 1 Competence Assessment Passport.

# Level 2 – Intermediate Knowledge and Skills

This Section describes the learners and learning outcomes and also includes the table of competence for intermediate level knowledge and skills for registered healthcare professionals who provide cancer care as part of their usual roles.

## Applicable to:

Registered healthcare professionals working in areas that accept, assess and/or admit acutely unwell patients. For example,

- Paramedics and Ambulance Clinicians
- General Practitioners
- Hospice and Palliative Care Community Teams
- Specialist Palliative Care Teams (or Level 3 if they have a regular, active participatory role in the provision of AO Services)
- Allied Healthcare Professionals working in acute care or oncology settings e.g. Therapeutic Radiographers
- Oncology / Haematology Site-Specific Clinical Nurse Specialists and oncology nurses in other settings e.g. SACT services, inpatient and outpatient oncology units
- All Junior Doctors in the hospital
- All Specialist Registrars, Speciality Doctors and Consultants in acute and emergency care areas
- Hospital consultants other than oncologists and haematologists

## Learning Outcomes

At Level 2, staff should be able to demonstrate an:

- Understanding of the principles of acute oncology
- Ability to recognise AO patients and presentations
- Understanding of the importance of urgent intervention to get the best outcomes for patients with acute complications of cancer and/or cancer treatments
- Awareness of how and when to contact the local Acute Oncology Service and have an understanding of the service they provide
- Ability to initiate urgent and emergency management
- Ability to refer to and communicate with the hospital Acute Oncology Service in a timely manner
- Ensure appropriate ongoing management of the patient.

It is expected that practitioners at this level will possess role-appropriate knowledge and understanding of cancer and its treatment and its application in acute oncology.

## Level 2 – Intermediate Knowledge and Skills

Competence	Requisite knowledge and skills
<b>A. An Understanding of the Role and Provision of the Local Acute Oncology Service</b>	
<b>Demonstrate an understanding of the hospital's Acute Oncology Service and its role in the acute care pathway</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who the acute oncology team is and how to contact them</li> <li>• Appropriate client / patient groups</li> <li>• Accessible acute oncology teams within the region</li> </ul>
<b>B. The 24/7 Oncology Advice Service</b>	
<b>Demonstrate an understanding of the 24/7 Patient Advice Line service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The advice line number</li> <li>• Appropriate client / patient groups, e.g. for patients who have received anti-cancer treatment or radiotherapy</li> <li>• How and when to direct patients to this service</li> <li>• Tools that can be used to assess patients' risk, e.g. UKONS Primary Care Risk Assessment Tool and patient-held alert cards</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate understanding of the 24/7 Consultant Oncologist On-Call Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to access this service, e.g. the contact pathway</li> <li>• Appropriate client / patient groups, e.g. for healthcare professionals to access urgent advice regarding patient management</li> <li>• When to contact this service</li> </ul>
<b>C. Acute Oncology Guidelines and Pathways</b>	
<b>Demonstrate knowledge of the hospital's Acute Oncology Guidelines and their content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to access Acute Oncology Guidelines e.g. hospital website / intranet / resource folders</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate knowledge of acute oncology management and pathways for patients presenting with acute oncology emergencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition of acute oncology patients and presentations</li> <li>• The importance of urgent intervention to ensure the best outcomes for patients with acute oncology problems</li> <li>• Initiate the required urgent / emergency management</li> <li>• Appropriate on-going management of the patient</li> <li>• Discuss the content of the hospital's Acute Oncology Management Guidelines</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate knowledge of patient routes of referral</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of acute oncology patient routes of entry as per local operational policy</li> <li>• Effective referral of patients through different routes of entry to acute oncology services, e.g. case discussion and observation of practice</li> </ul>

Level 2 – Intermediate Knowledge and Skills (Continued)

Competence	Requisite knowledge and skills
<b>C. Acute Oncology Guidelines and Pathways</b>	
<p><b>Demonstrate understanding of the protocols associated with the Acute Oncology Service</b></p>	<p>The location and content of relevant acute oncology- related protocols / operational policies This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accident &amp; emergency (A&amp;E) and Acute Medical</li> <li>• Admissions (AMU) Oncology Communication Protocols</li> <li>• Acute Oncology Service Assessment/Communication Protocols</li> <li>• Acute Oncology Treatment Protocols</li> <li>• Fast-Track Referral Protocols (if applicable)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Demonstrate knowledge of the spinal metastases and Metastatic Spinal Cord Compression (MSCC) Pathway</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of 'Red Flags' and use of patient alert cards</li> <li>• The pathway and process for urgent referral</li> <li>• Awareness of the initial care and management of patients with suspected spinal metastases or MSCC, e.g. spinal stability and safety</li> <li>• Awareness of the hospital's referral process for spinal metastases and MSCC</li> </ul>
<p><b>Demonstrate knowledge of the suspected (neutropenic) sepsis care pathway</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of the patients' risk of sepsis</li> <li>• Tools that can be used to assess patient risk e.g. UKONS Risk Assessment Tool and patient alert cards</li> <li>• Recognition of significant signs and symptoms that would prompt urgent referral / treatment</li> <li>• Initiation of urgent treatment, e.g. presentation to treatment &lt;1 hour, use of patient group directive if available in area of practice</li> <li>• Awareness of the urgent admission / referral routes, e.g. A&amp;E / AMU</li> </ul>
<p><b>Demonstrate knowledge of the malignancy of unknown origin (MUO) and carcinoma of unknown primary (CUP) pathways</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of the referral pathway for the appropriate investigation of patients who might benefit from treatment for unknown primary cancers (targeted investigations)</li> <li>• Fast-track process (if available) for the rapid assessment of MUO or CUP patients, e.g. oncology or specialist palliative care</li> <li>• Inter-multidisciplinary team referral to the CUP assessment team / multidisciplinary team / keyworker role</li> </ul>

## Level 2 – Intermediate Knowledge and Skills (Continued)

Competence	Requisite knowledge and skills
<b>C. Acute Oncology Guidelines and Pathways</b>	
<b>Demonstrate knowledge of care and management of central venous access devices (CVADs) if applicable to role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to access, clean, flush and replace dressing on a CVAD</li> <li>• Awareness of potential complications and their management, e.g. can identify a line that is infected or blocked and explain the action that should be taken</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate knowledge of treatment pathways for patients presenting with acute complications of non-surgical cancer treatment or from the disease itself</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate an understanding of other acute oncology indications and the ability to identify common patient presentations of symptoms with acute cancer or cancer treatment complications</li> <li>• Ability to take appropriate action within scope of practice after recognition of potential emergency symptoms e.g. initial care and management of the patient, referral to AOS and awareness of other specialties involved in the management of complex issues</li> <li>• Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of early recognition symptoms and appropriate referral e.g. understanding that some initial signs and symptoms of immunotherapy toxicities may be subtle and an awareness of the impact of delayed treatment</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate awareness of audit requirements, whether local or national, for this group of patients</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local neutropenic sepsis audit 1-hour door to needle</li> <li>• Metastatic spinal cord compression referral and treatment targets</li> </ul>
<b>D. Communication and Documentation</b>	
<b>Demonstrate the importance of communication of a patient's presentation and/or admission</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition of importance of communication in the safe efficient patient care pathway</li> <li>• A description of the appropriate communication pathway</li> <li>• List who should be contacted</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate the importance of comprehensive documentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition of the importance of correct documentation, e.g. legal and professional responsibilities</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate knowledge of the Oncology Flagging System (if in use)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose of flagging an urgent care need</li> <li>• How, when and which patient groups should be flagged and to whom</li> <li>• Know how to access the alert message / flag</li> </ul>

### Assessment

Evidence of achievement of competency will be demonstrated by completion of the Level 2 Competence Assessment Passport.

# Level 3 – Advanced Knowledge and Skills

This Section describes the learners and learning outcomes and also includes the table of competence for advanced level knowledge and skills for registered healthcare professionals who have a regular, active participatory role in the provision of Acute Oncology Services.

## Applicable to

- Acute Oncology Clinical Nurse Specialists and Specialist AHP roles
- Acute Oncology Advanced Clinical Practitioners
- All Specialist Registrars in oncology and haematology
- Members of the Specialist Palliative Care Team, if they have a regular, active participatory role in the provision of Acute Oncology Services.

*Professionals listed above should also complete Level 4 competencies if they are responsible for service development / management*

## Learning outcomes

At Level 3, staff should be able to demonstrate:

- A comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the principles of acute oncology
- An ability to recognise the full range of AO presentations
- A comprehensive understanding of the scope of the Acute Oncology Service provided locally and regionally
- An understanding of the importance of urgent intervention to optimise patient outcomes
- An ability to initiate and manage urgent / emergency AO presentations
- An ability to provide appropriate ongoing management of the patient
- An ability to refer to and communicate to relevant team members and specialties in a timely manner
- Application of advanced clinical skills to prevent serious complications as early as possible
- An ability to make advanced clinical decisions and provide expert advice on issues, such as escalation and ceiling of care
- Participation in the development of relevant protocols and pathways
- Regular involvement in activities to improve service quality, such as clinical audits, mortality and morbidity reviews, serious incident reviews and relevant research activity
- Delivery of education and training and undertake assessment of competence for learners at Practice Levels 1, 2 and/or 3.

Undertaking this process will facilitate a development programme for more junior staff joining the AOS workforce. The skills and competencies linked to the more strategic and service development role within the AOS may not be relevant to the individual's post.

***Staff working at this level should either possess or be working towards an in-depth knowledge of disease-specific guidance and management; and possess advanced communication skills.***



## Level 3 – Advanced Knowledge and Skills

Competence	Requisite knowledge and skills
<b>A. Local and Regional Acute Oncology Service</b>	
<b>Demonstrate understanding of the local and regional Acute Oncology Service and its role in the acute care pathway</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An overview of the aims and objectives of the Acute Oncology Service</li> <li>• The specific responsibilities and services provided by significant neighbours</li> <li>• List Acute Oncology Service contact points within each significant organisation</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate knowledge of the Network Acute Oncology Group (where applicable)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group's role</li> <li>• Core membership</li> <li>• Contact points</li> <li>• The frequency of meetings</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate knowledge of and involvement in the hospital /trust Acute Oncology Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group's role</li> <li>• Membership</li> <li>• Contact points</li> <li>• Frequency of meetings</li> <li>• The Acute Oncology Group Terms of Reference / Operational Policy</li> </ul>
<b>B. Important or Urgent Intervention</b>	
<b>Demonstrate an understanding of the 24/7 Patient Advice Line / telephone triage service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the remit of the advice line service</li> <li>• Discuss the protocol / pathway for patient review and referral to acute oncology or other disciplines: GP / primary healthcare team or assessment in hospital</li> <li>• Discuss the benefits of proactive management / identification of potential problems early, with face-to-face assessment as required</li> <li>• Involvement in the audit and review of triage outcomes</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate competence in the delivery of this service, if applicable to role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competent in the use of the locally agreed triage assessment process</li> <li>• Telephone follow up / support post triage for patients on active anti-cancer treatment or radiotherapy</li> <li>• Full documentation of triage communication and outcomes</li> </ul>

## Level 3 – Advanced Knowledge and Skills (Continued)

Competence	Requisite knowledge and skills
<b>B. Important or Urgent Intervention</b>	
<p><b>Demonstrate knowledge of assessment and management of oncological emergencies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying clinical assessment skills to inform decision making and the management of patients on each of these emergency pathways</li> <li>• Applying knowledge of systematic assessment and management</li> <li>• Discussion of differential diagnosis following examination, and facilitation of appropriate investigations</li> <li>• Initiation of required urgent / emergency</li> </ul>
<b>C. Acute Oncology Guidelines and Protocols</b>	
<p><b>Demonstrate an understanding of the role-associated experts and application within Acute Oncology Service</b></p>	<p>Understanding the role of the listed experts and when and how to obtain a specialist's opinion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acute medicine, critical care, surgery</li> <li>• Haematology</li> <li>• Oncology-associated specialists</li> <li>• Specialist palliative care</li> </ul>
<p><b>Demonstrate an understanding of the procedure for the review of patients in the emergency departments, AMUs, and other wards</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with associated teams to manage patient pathways</li> <li>• Escalate patients with concerning signs / symptoms to an appropriate team member, e.g. oncologist / on-call team for haematology or oncology</li> <li>• Make appropriate interventions and onward referrals for patients whose presentation indicates no more treatment, no more intervention and who maybe entering terminal stage illness, e.g. involvement of the specialist palliative care team</li> <li>• Participate in handover meetings</li> </ul>
<p><b>Demonstrate an understanding of the discharge process locally and how this is applicable to acute oncology patients</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the hospital discharge process and how to support appropriate discharge, e.g. follow-up, referrals, criteria for fast-track discharge</li> <li>• Understand the role of clinical teams to discharge patients as appropriate</li> </ul>

### Level 3 – Advanced Knowledge and Skills (Continued)

Competence	Requisite knowledge and skills
<b>D. Acute Oncology Pathways</b>	
<p><b>Demonstrate knowledge of patient presentation pathways / routes of entry</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of acute oncology patient routes of entry as per local operational policy</li> <li>• Demonstration of effective management of patients through different routes of entry to acute oncology, e.g. A&amp;E / acute medical departments, same day emergency care (SDEC) units / ambulatory care units, through case discussion and observation of practice</li> </ul>
<p><b>Demonstrate knowledge of the 24/7 Consultant Oncologist On-Call Service</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing how to access the acute oncology team and oncology on-call service 24 hours a day</li> <li>• Knowing who are the appropriate client / patient groups for this service, e.g. for healthcare professionals to access urgent advice regarding patient management</li> </ul>
<p><b>Demonstrate knowledge of the spinal metastases and metastatic spinal cord compression (MSCC) pathway</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of the care and management of patients with suspected spinal metastases or MSCC, e.g. spinal stability and promoting early mobilisation, urgent imaging / role of steroids</li> <li>• Participation in the clinical assessment of patients with suspected spinal metastases or MSCC</li> <li>• Discussion of responsibilities and knowledge of who to contact if a patient is admitted with suspected new spinal metastases or MSCC</li> <li>• Discussion of the spinal / orthopaedic surgical role in management of spinal metastases and MSCC</li> <li>• Understand the content of guidelines for patients with signs and symptoms of spinal metastases and MSCC</li> <li>• A working knowledge of the referral pathway for obtaining specialist clinical advice: Spinal Surgeon / Oncologist / Radiologist and how this service operates for local acute oncology teams</li> </ul>

## Level 3 – Advanced Knowledge and Skills (Continued)

Competence	Requisite knowledge and skills
<b>D. Acute Oncology Pathways</b>	
<p><b>Demonstrate knowledge of the suspected (neutropenic) sepsis care pathway</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-depth knowledge of the sepsis pathway and significant signs and symptoms that would prompt urgent referral and treatment</li> <li>• Application of Sepsis Risk Assessment Tools, e.g. Multinational Association of Supportive Care in Cancer (MASCC) / UKONS 24-hour triage /Sepsis 6</li> <li>• Initiation and continuation of urgent treatment / enter patient into the pathway, e.g. antibiotics within 1 hour of presentation</li> <li>• Application of non-medical prescriber / patient group directive if available in area of practice</li> <li>• Completion of audit requirements for the neutropenic sepsis pathway in line with local and national requirements and standards</li> </ul>
<p><b>Demonstrate knowledge of the malignancy of unknown origin (MUO) and carcinoma of unknown primary (CUP) pathways</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of referral pathways for the appropriate investigation of patients who might benefit from treatment for unknown primary cancers (targeted investigations)</li> <li>• Fast-track process (if available) for the rapid assessment of MUO/CUP patients, e.g. oncology or specialist palliative care</li> <li>• Inter-multidisciplinary team referral to the CUP assessment team / multidisciplinary team</li> <li>• Undertake a recognised keyworker role to offer information, support, holistic needs, and initiate referrals to other key services as required, if applicable to role</li> </ul>
<p><b>Demonstrate knowledge of care and management of central venous access devices (CVADs)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clinical assessment of the individual’s ability to access, clean, flush and replace dressing of CVAD, if applicable to role</li> <li>• Explanation of potential complications and their management, e.g. identify a line that is infected or blocked and what action should be taken</li> <li>• Undertake education in the care and management of the CVADs for cancer patients / staff, if applicable to role</li> </ul>
<p><b>Demonstrate knowledge of the care and management of patients experiencing acute complications of non-surgical cancer treatment or from the disease itself</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate a detailed understanding of a range of AO indications, including recognition of less common presentations e.g. complex immune-mediated toxicities</li> <li>• Referral to appropriate specialties following initial patient management</li> <li>• Demonstrate the principles of safe ambulatory management of appropriate conditions</li> </ul>

### Level 3 – Advanced Knowledge and Skills (Continued)

Competence	Requisite knowledge and skills
<b>E. Referral and Communication Protocols</b>	
<b>Demonstrate the importance of communication of a patient's presentation and /or admission</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition of the importance of communication in the delivery of safe, efficient patient care pathways</li> <li>• A description of the appropriate communication pathway</li> <li>• List of who should be contacted and methods of communication</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate the importance of comprehensive documentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition of the importance of correct documentation, e.g. legal and professional responsibilities</li> <li>• Documentation of clinical findings, advice given and action taken in shared patient records</li> <li>• Critique and review of clinical notes as required</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate knowledge of the Oncology Flagging System (if in use)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of the oncology flagging system and purpose of flagging an urgent patient episode</li> <li>• How, when and which patient groups are flagged and to whom</li> <li>• Knowledge of how to access and update the alert message / flag, e.g. who to contact</li> </ul>
<b>F. Service Review and Development</b>	
<b>Demonstrate knowledge and participate in the development and review of relevant protocols and pathways</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involvement in the development and review of acute oncology protocols and pathways at a local, regional and national level</li> <li>• Discussion of the importance of agreed protocols and pathways</li> <li>• Discussion of the local process for development and governance of guidelines and protocols</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate knowledge of and involvement in education and training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of local, regional and national level education and training e.g. in-house, online, e-learning modules that support the development and ongoing competency of the Acute Oncology Services practitioner</li> <li>• Participation in the education, training and assessment of competency for training staff at Level 1 and Level 2 of the Competency Skills Framework</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate involvement of audit requirements for this group of patients, whether local or national</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entering acute oncology data, including outcomes (if applicable to role)</li> <li>• Participation in audit requirements for this group of patients, whether local or national</li> </ul>

#### Assessment

Evidence of achievement of competency will be demonstrated by completion of the Level 3 Competence Assessment Passport.

# Level 4 – Expert Knowledge and Skills

This Section describes the learners and learning outcomes and also includes the table of competence for expert level knowledge and skills for registered healthcare professionals who have a participatory role in acute oncology services and are responsible for acute oncology service development / management / clinical leadership.

## Applicable to:

- Acute Oncology Nurse / AHP Consultants
- Acute Oncology Advanced Clinical Practitioners
- Acute Oncology Speciality Doctors
- Oncology Consultants
- Haematology Consultants
- Palliative Care Consultants, if they have a regular, active participatory role in the development, leadership and provision of Acute Oncology Services

## Learning outcomes

At Level 4, staff should be able to demonstrate:

- A comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the principles of acute oncology
- An ability to recognise the full range of AO presentations
- Leadership of AOS locally and regionally and participate in national AO initiatives
- An understanding of the importance of urgent intervention to optimise patient outcomes
- An ability to provide early specialist input for oncology patients, enabling safe and high-quality care of acute oncology patients, including prompt management and early discharge
- An ability to perform urgent reviews of patients with complications of cancer and make rapid referrals back to the specialist oncology and/or palliative care teams, e.g. the appropriate investigation of patients who might benefit from treatment for metastatic spinal cord compression
- Appropriate investigation of patients who might benefit from treatment for unknown primary cancers, and ensure appropriate targeted investigations for and rapid triage of patients to specialist oncology or palliative care
- Coordination and supervision of appropriate ongoing management of the patient
- Application of advanced clinical skills, clinical decision making and robust leadership to prevent or detect serious complications as early as possible
- Ability to make advanced clinical management decisions and provide expert advice on issues, such as treatment escalation and ceiling of care
- Robust clinical leadership in the development of relevant protocols and pathways
- Robust clinical leadership of service quality improvement activities, such as clinical audits, mortality and morbidity reviews, serious incident reviews, and relevant research activity
- A key role in developing the service and monitoring its impact using agreed key metrics and outcome measures
- Working alongside other clinical colleagues in oncology, palliative care, emergency, acute medicine, radiology, and pathology departments to ensure the quality of care of patients is maximised. This will include the development of clinical guidelines and education programmes
- Delivery of education and training and undertake assessment of competence for learners at all Levels of Practice.

**All staff entering this level should have completed Level 3 competencies or provide evidence of existing prior competence.**

## Level 4 – Expert Knowledge and Skills

Competence	Requisite knowledge and skills
<b>A. Local and Regional Acute Oncology Service</b>	
<b>Demonstrate understanding of the local and regional Acute Oncology Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive knowledge and understanding of the configuration of the Acute Oncology Service locally and regionally and the specific responsibilities and services provided by significant neighbours</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate understanding of The Network Acute Oncology Expert Advisory Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration of the individual's role as a member of the local and regional network group</li> <li>• Provision of evidence of participation in the development of network guidelines and policies</li> <li>• Evidence of involvement in network-wide audits</li> <li>• How you ensure the interests of patients and local organisation are fully considered at network level</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate knowledge of and involvement with the Acute Oncology Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of the Acute Oncology Team within the hospital; its role and responsibilities</li> <li>• Discussion of the individual's role as a member of this team</li> </ul>
<b>B. Acute Oncology Guidelines and Protocols</b>	
<b>Demonstrate detailed understanding of and involvement in the Acute Oncology Referral Guidelines</b>	<p>In-depth knowledge of the acute oncology referral guidelines, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral to the Acute Oncology Service from a 24-hour triage / advices line service</li> <li>• Referral to the Acute Oncology Service from admission portals, e.g. A&amp;E, AMU, SDEC and ambulatory care units</li> <li>• Referral from the Acute Oncology Service to a specialist oncology team such as a radiotherapy or site-specific service</li> <li>• Fast-track Clinic Referral Protocols for use in admissions portals, by members of acute oncology teams</li> <li>• Explain how the use of referral protocols and guidance can impact on the early, appropriate assessment and management of patients thereby supporting early intervention, appropriate discharge, ambulatory care and possible admission avoidance</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate knowledge of the principles of the Acute Oncology Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involvement and review of acute oncology patient routes of entry, as defined and agreed per operational policy</li> <li>• Effective management of patients through different routes of entry</li> </ul>

## Level 4 – Expert Knowledge and Skills (Continued)

Competence	Requisite knowledge and skills
<b>C. Acute Oncology Patient Pathways</b>	
<b>Demonstrate detailed knowledge of the assessment and management of oncological emergencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed clinical assessment for the management of acute oncology patient emergency pathways</li> <li>• Discussion of differential diagnosis following examination, and knowledge of appropriate investigations</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate knowledge and involvement in the malignancy of unknown origin (MUO) and carcinoma of unknown primary (CUP) pathways</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed knowledge and skill of the appropriate investigation and management of patients who might benefit from treatment for unknown primary cancers (targeted investigations and rapid triage of patients into specialist oncology or palliative care)</li> <li>• Discussion of local and national guidelines and evidence of implementation in clinical practice</li> <li>• Participation in service audits and dissemination of results</li> </ul>
<b>D. Service Leadership, Management, Review and Development</b>	
<b>Provide evidence of acute oncology leadership and its impact on service</b>	<p>Clinical leadership to set up, develop and maintain a high-quality Acute Oncology Service. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of clinical and professional support to acute oncology team members</li> <li>• Advocacy for the Acute Oncology Service — being the voice of the service at relevant local, regional and national meetings</li> <li>• Regular audit of patient / staff experience and patient outcomes</li> <li>• Update of appropriate guidelines and pathways</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate involvement in the audit process and provide evidence of any impact on the service</b>	<p>Demonstration of how regular data analysis, evaluation and presentation have impacted on the service; this may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice line activity</li> <li>• Time to acute oncology assessment</li> <li>• Antibiotic door-to-needle time</li> <li>• Suspected spinal metastases and MSEC pathway</li> <li>• Admission avoidance/Ambulatory care pathways and/or application of the principles of Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC) to AO settings</li> <li>• Length of stay</li> <li>• Clinical incidents, adverse events and morbidity and mortality review</li> <li>• Deaths within 30 days of receiving treatment</li> <li>• Feedback, complaints and patient and staff satisfaction</li> <li>• Presentation of audit findings to relevant governance groups</li> </ul>



## Level 4 – Expert Knowledge and Skills (Continued)

Competence	Requisite knowledge and skills
<b>D. Service Leadership, Management, Review and Development</b>	
<b>Demonstrate involvement in service review and development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service provision is maintained</li> <li>• Staffing levels are reviewed and maintained</li> <li>• The service is robust, safe and effective / efficient</li> <li>• Workload requirements are reviewed and any areas of need or concern are highlighted</li> <li>• Timely management of acute oncology patients is provided within 24 hours (where permitted), e.g. 7-day working</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate involvement in service quality improvement activities / research activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acute Oncology Services have been benchmarked and monitored against compliance with nationally agreed quality indicators</li> <li>• Non-compliance has been highlighted locally and what improvement / action plan has been agreed</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate involvement in the development, review and implementation of key operational pathways, policies, guidelines and protocols</b>	<p>Evidence of involvement in the review / development and implementation of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acute Oncology Operational Policy</li> <li>• Acute Oncology Initial Management Guidelines, including care of suspected neutropenic sepsis Admission and Assessment Pathway, and protocols / policies for management of immune-mediated toxicities</li> <li>• Suspected spinal metastases and MSEC referral and review pathways</li> <li>• Implementation of an MUO/CUP protocol / pathway</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate involvement in staff development and appraisal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involvement in the review and appraisal process to support staff development and identification of training needs</li> <li>• Participation in the mentorship and assessment of competency for staff training at Level 3 of the knowledge and skills framework</li> </ul>
<b>Acute oncology education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading the development and delivery of a wide range of acute oncology educational activities and ensuring staff participation</li> </ul>
<b>Evidence of clinical leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of the coordination and supervision of the ongoing management of patients with acute oncology emergencies to prevent, reduce or detect serious complications as early as possible</li> <li>• Promoting and undertaking advanced decision making to support escalation and or ceiling of care / Advanced Care Planning</li> </ul>

### Assessment

Evidence of achievement of competency will be demonstrated by completion of the Level 4 Competence Assessment Passport.

# 4. AO Competence Assessment Passport User Guide

The competencies listed in the UKONS Acute Oncology Knowledge and Skills Framework are assessed using the Acute Oncology Competence Assessment Passports. Like the Knowledge and Skills Framework, there is a Passport for each of the four Levels of Practice. The development, evaluation and peer-review of the Passports was conducted with the National Acute Oncology Education Working Group, which is a group of multi-disciplinary professionals and clinical educators with expertise in or experience of acute oncology from the four nations of the UK. The format of the Passports is dependent upon the Level of Practice. Both the format of the Passports and how to use them are described in this section.

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## Definitions

The Competence Assessment Passports are aimed at healthcare professionals of all disciplines, for clarity the term **Learner** has been used throughout the Passports to describe any healthcare staff completing the competence assessment passport at that Level of Practice.

The term **Assessor** has been used throughout the Passports to describe the health professional who verifies achievement of competence for Levels 2, 3 and 4.

The term **Organisation** has been used to describe where learners work, this could be within a hospital or a community setting, and this term has been used throughout the Passports to ensure inclusivity of healthcare settings across the four nations, for example: hospital trust, health board, etc. This term has been used to avoid exclusion of any areas that learners may be based in, as this passport document is aimed at a wide range of staff in a variety of different roles and places of work.

The term **Competence** was used to determine learners' ability and readiness to provide high-quality services. Answers to competence assessment questions may vary depending on both the role and setting in which learners work and answers should be completed according to local services, policies and protocols, where applicable.

## Format of the Passports

The Level 1 Digital AO Competence Assessment Passport is incorporated into an online Introduction to Acute Oncology Course, which was created by Macmillan Cancer Support. The Level 1 Passport (the online resource) can be found on the Macmillan Learning Hub: [macmillan.fuseuniversal.com/communities/3463/contents/398084](https://macmillan.fuseuniversal.com/communities/3463/contents/398084)

The Level 1 Passport is automatically assessed. After completing the online assessment learners, learners are issued with a certificate of competence. They have the option to complete a reflective discussion with a mentor or supervisor in practice to consolidate their learning and discuss how they apply the Level 1 Core AO knowledge and skills to their role. This may take place as part of an annual appraisal discussion.

The Level 2 and 3 Passports are question and answer style workbooks (similar to the UKONS SACT Competence Assessment Passport). Competence for practice Levels 2 and 3 is demonstrated by formal assessment and completion of the certificate of competence at the back of the Passport. The Assessor needs to have completed the Passport at the Level of, or above, the Level of Practice they are assessing and completed the online AO assessor training course.

Some learners, where relevant to their role may choose to complete reflections on their own learning as an additional activity. There is an option to complete a reflective discussion template to record this with their assessor should they wish to gain feedback and evidence their ongoing development.

Throughout the process of completing the Passport, the learner competence may be assessed by other suitably qualified mentors or clinical supervisors as sections of the Passport are completed. The final sign off of the Level 2 and Level 3 Passports should be conducted by the nominated Passport assessor.

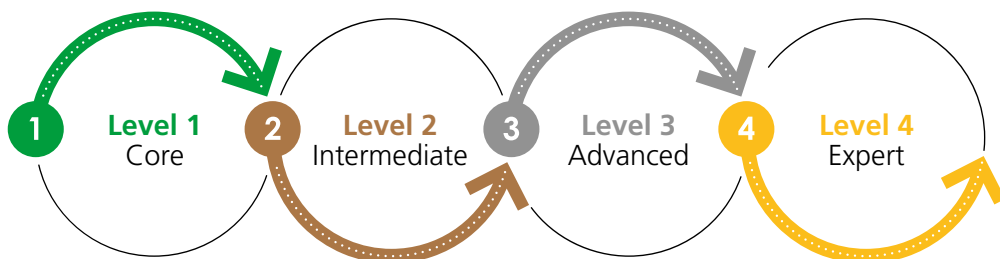
The Level 4 Passport consists of a table of competences, structured according to the four pillars of advanced practice. This should be used to demonstrate evidence of competence, either by submission of a portfolio of evidence or through a viva-style interview with a peer assessor. Passports at Levels 2, 3 and 4 can be downloaded as interactive PDF documents or hard copies ordered from: [ukons.myprintdesk.net/home](http://ukons.myprintdesk.net/home)

## Prerequisites

Prior to completion, each of the passports provide pre-requisites for each level of practice. Learners should be aware of all relevant local policies and completed organisation based mandatory training relating to the care of acute oncology patients.

Before learners complete the Passport, they should have undertaken learning for the appropriate Level of Practice or equivalent experience and knowledge from clinical practice. This may include a locally designed education and training, e-learning or a university module.

Existing AO online learning has been mapped to the learning outcomes for each of the four Level of Practice within the UKONS AO Knowledge and Skills Framework. See figure 4.



**Figure 4.** Four levels of acute oncology knowledge and skills competence

**Level 1:** The Level 1 Passport (the online resource) can be found on the Macmillan Learning Hub: [macmillan.fuseuniversal.com/communities/3463/contents/398084](http://macmillan.fuseuniversal.com/communities/3463/contents/398084) Learners can create a free account to access the resource and the pre-requisite learning is incorporated within the digital Passport.

**Level 2:** Online learning at Level 2 can be accessed via Guy's Cancer Academy: [learning.guyscanceracademy.co.uk/level-2-acute-oncology/#/](http://learning.guyscanceracademy.co.uk/level-2-acute-oncology/#/) Learners should note that as this resource is hosted in a way to ensure it is free to access, progress will not be saved. However, if the course is not able to be completed in one sitting, learners can navigate to specific sections within the module to continue their learning. Level 2 content may also map to existing study days within organisations so Passports may be incorporated within induction sessions.

**Level 3:** The equivalent prerequisite learning for Level 3 is a postgraduate AO course accredited at Masters Level. There are a number of courses at universities across the UK and links are often signposted to via UKONS and UKAOS websites.

**Level 4:** A range of learning and experience in practice as a senior leader would provide evidence for competence at Level 4. Learning may include CPD courses at Masters level or above, for example accredited ACP portfolios, leadership courses or the Macmillan 'Evidencing Work Based Learning module' ([macmillan.fuseuniversal.com/communities/3463/contents/418130](http://macmillan.fuseuniversal.com/communities/3463/contents/418130)) Please email [ServiceOpsSupport@macmillan.org.uk](mailto:ServiceOpsSupport@macmillan.org.uk) for an application form or further information.

## Professional responsibility

Personal and professional responsibility for the learner should be guided by local organisation policy specific to their job role and governing body registration for registered staff, for example, NMC, GMC, HCPC. All learners completing this document should be guided by their job role, working within their scope of practice and according to their organisation's values and behaviours. All staff should be aware of key responsibilities, such as documentation, ethical practice and safeguarding and be guided by organisation-specific policies and protocols.

## Guidance for completion

All learners, regardless of level of practice, should demonstrate competencies evidenced by completion of the passport and demonstrate up-to-date competence by undertaking a re-assessment of competency. The learner is responsible for keeping their completed passport as evidence of their competency, which can be used to inform ongoing career development. Managers may wish to log completion of competency assessment for their staff.

All answers relating to local emergency oncology provision within the learner's organisation should be specific to their region and follow local policies and protocols. Learners should have an awareness that there may be differences between AO services in different geographical regions. These answers will need to be revisited should the learner change regions. Should the learner change their level of practice, it is advised that they demonstrate competency at their new level of practice. As the Passports are designed to be multidisciplinary and used across a variety of healthcare settings, learners will provide answers specific to their own role and scope of practice.

## Completion time

It is expected that learners will complete this passport within the following agreed timescales:

- **Level 1:** To consolidate knowledge and get the most out of the resource, it is recommended that learners try to complete the module within a few weeks of starting it.
- **Level 2:** Between 3 to 9 months depending on area of practice as agreed with assessor
- **Level 3:** Between 6 to 9 months depending if completed alongside an accredited module or as a standalone CPD activity
- **Level 4:** It is expected that learners should complete this Passport within 6 months of starting it.

Where learners require a longer period of time to complete the Passport, for example due to mitigating circumstances, the completion date should be agreed with the practice assessor but must be completed within 12 months.

## Study time requirements

Data on completion times was collected during the pilot of the Passports and has guided the recommendations for study time listed below, although this may require tailoring to the individual needs of the learner around availability to release staff for CPD activity.

- **Level 1:** Between 2 to 4 hours. Learners with additional learning needs around digital literacy may need additional study time and support from practice supervisors/mentors.
- **Level 2:** 1 to 2 days of study.
- **Level 3:** Around 1 week of study time, however this may be spread across a semester if completed alongside an accredited AO course so may equate to around 1 hour of study time weekly, within pre-allocated study leave.
- **Level 4:** Variable depending on learners choice of compiling a portfolio of evidence versus undertaking a viva-style interview with their peer assessor.

# 5. Passport Assessment Information

## Prerequisites for Assessors

Acute Oncology Competence Passport Assessors should be individuals (from any health professional discipline) who are:

- In a senior acute oncology or education role with knowledge of acute oncology
- Have completed the Level of Passport equivalent or higher to the level being assessed
- Have a mentorship/assessor/teaching qualification or equivalent experience of clinical assessment in practice
- Have access to evidence-based information, such as national resources, peer-reviewed journals, scientific committee recommendations and local policies and guidelines.

## Assessors Training

UKONS have developed an online course to become a Passport assessor. The course is hosted within the Greater Manchester Cancer Academy and can be accessed via the AO Academy page from the following link:

[www.gmcanceracademy.org.uk/courses/acute-oncology-competence-assessment-passport-assessoronline-learning-course/](http://www.gmcanceracademy.org.uk/courses/acute-oncology-competence-assessment-passport-assessoronline-learning-course/)

To access the course, individuals will need to register for a free account but this will enable progress to be saved and a certificate of completion to be generated. Within the course, assessors will learn about:

- The purpose of the AO Competence Assessment Passports
- The knowledge, skills and experience needed by staff to begin the AO Competence Assessment Passports at Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4
- The roles and responsibilities of learners and assessors
- How to provide effective feedback to learners
- How to identify and support underachieving learners
- How to record completion of the AO Competence Assessment Passports
- How to re-accredit competence
- Where to access the AO Competence Assessment Passport Model Answer Guide and Certificate of Completion

The elearning has been CPD accredited for 2 hours. On completion of the course, a certificate will be generated and UKONS will then be able to release copies of the Level 2 and/or Level 3 answer guides as a password protected PDF containing model answers to each question.

These assessor guides have editable text fields within the PDF document. It is recommended that within each organisation, notes are added to agree standardised answers where the question relates to a local policy. Assessors may find it beneficial to connect with others across their network or cancer alliance to agree regional notes but some policies or guidance will be bespoke to each organisation.

## Overview of the Assessment Process

01

Users are expected to work with their supervisor / mentor to agree the level of skill applicable to their individual role and responsibilities.

02

The list of competencies defined in this guidance should be cross-referenced with the individual's job description and competency level/s to be achieved and agreed. This process should also be followed for roles that are not listed.

03

It is recognised that some individual competency measures in the agreed level may not apply to the individual's role; in this case they can be marked as not applicable. Once agreed with the line manager / appropriate manager.

04

This will provide an individualised set of role-specific competencies agreed by both the individual concerned and their line manager.

05

The Passport at the agreed skill level should be completed, and competency confirmed by an agreed mentor / assessor within your organisation.

## Assessment process for Level 2 and 3

It is expected that learners will meet a level of safety and competence on initial completion of the theoretical passports. However, the passports can also be used to evidence continued learning where answers can be revisited to add depth and show ongoing development in AO knowledge and skills.

However, assessors should expect that more experienced learners would be expected to show a deeper level of knowledge and critique sources of evidence. For example, a new in practice AO clinical nurse specialist may successfully achieve competence at Level 3 but an experienced colleague or Advanced Clinical Practitioner within the same team may have also completed the Level 3 Passport but their answers and referenced subject matter will reflect a richer evidence base and draw on their experiential learning in practice. Further details about the assessment process for assessors is available within the AO Competence Assessment Passport Assessor online learning: [www.gmcanceracademy.org.uk/courses/acute-oncology-competence-assessment-passport-assessor-online-learning-course/](http://www.gmcanceracademy.org.uk/courses/acute-oncology-competence-assessment-passport-assessor-online-learning-course/)

## Assessment Process for Level 4

Demonstrating Level 4 knowledge, skills and competence will differ from the Level 1 – 3 Passports, where competence is assessed either through a reflective discussion (viva-style interview) or by submission of a portfolio of evidence.

It is expected that learners demonstrate knowledge and skills in each section of the table of competence using relevant evidence. To assess competence the assessor should review evidence against the table of competence. It is helpful for the learner and their assessor to meet prior to summative assessment so that formative feedback can be provided. Assessor feedback can be recorded within the reflective discussion template within the Passport. It is recommended that Level 4 Assessors are peers who have gained the certificate of competence at Level 4.

## Re-accreditation

Completion of the reaccreditation certificate every three years for Level 2 and annually for Level 3.

Step Three involves completion of the reaccreditation certificate annually; it is recommended that this could form part of the learner's annual appraisal. Further details for assessors about this process are available within the AO Competence Assessment Passport Assessor online learning: [www.gmcanceracademy.org.uk/courses/acute-oncology-competence-assessment-passport-assessor-online-learning-course/](http://www.gmcanceracademy.org.uk/courses/acute-oncology-competence-assessment-passport-assessor-online-learning-course/).

## Competence exemption

As the Passports are designed to be multidisciplinary and used across a variety of healthcare settings learners will provide answers specific to their own role and scope of practice. However, it is acknowledged that some questions may still remain outside the requirements of their role. Prior to completing the passport, a discussion between the learner and the assessor should take place to agree any competencies should be omitted so that these learners can still achieve overall competence with the passport.

This discussion should be documented with the exempted competencies listed in the Competency Assessment Section of each passport. Assessors should discuss the rationale for exclusion of competencies to ensure that minimal learning content is omitted and highlight how the learner's role does not require this to be completed. Further details for assessors about the agreeing competence exemptions with learners is available within the AO Competence Assessment Passport Assessor online learning: [www.gmcanceracademy.org.uk/courses/acute-oncology-competence-assessment-passport-assessor-online-learning-course/](http://www.gmcanceracademy.org.uk/courses/acute-oncology-competence-assessment-passport-assessor-online-learning-course/)

# 6. Recommended Reading

Multi-disciplinary healthcare workers will identify key learning resources that may be used to provide training and support achievement of competency. If you have training resources that can be shared and utilised by others, then please contact UKONS Acute Oncology Members Interest Group via the UKONS website ([ukons.org/membersinterest-groups/acute-oncology-services-mig/](http://ukons.org/membersinterest-groups/acute-oncology-services-mig/)). This group are compiling a repository of AO education and training resources to share with AO Passport learners and assessors.

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Please find listed below additional acute oncology education and training resources to supplement learners' theoretical learning prior to or during completion of the passport. This is a non-exhaustive list. There are also references included within the Passports.

- ACCEND Learning Hub: [learninghub.nhs.uk/catalogue/ACCEND](http://learninghub.nhs.uk/catalogue/ACCEND)
- Chemocare website: [chemocare.com/](http://chemocare.com/)
- Clatterbridge Cancer Centre Guidance: [clatterbridgecc.nhs.uk/professionals/guidance](http://clatterbridgecc.nhs.uk/professionals/guidance)
- Electronic Medicines Compendium: [www.medicines.org.uk/emc#gref](http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc#gref)
- European Medicines Agency: [www.ema.europa.eu/en/glossary/summary-product-characteristics](http://www.ema.europa.eu/en/glossary/summary-product-characteristics)
- European Oncology Nursing Society (EONS). The EONS Cancer Nursing Education Framework. (2022) [Online] Available at: [cancernurse.eu/education/cancer-nursing-education-framework](http://cancernurse.eu/education/cancer-nursing-education-framework).
- European Society for Medical Oncology: [www.esmo.org/guidelines](http://www.esmo.org/guidelines)
- Greater Manchester Cancer Academy: [www.gmcanceracademy.org.uk/](http://www.gmcanceracademy.org.uk/)
- Guy's Cancer Academy: [www.guyscanceracademy.co.uk/](http://www.guyscanceracademy.co.uk/)
- Macmillan learning and communications hub: [www.macmillan.org.uk/healthcare-professionals/macmillanprofessionals/learning-and-development](http://www.macmillan.org.uk/healthcare-professionals/macmillanprofessionals/learning-and-development)
- National Cancer Institute Dictionary: [www.cancer.gov/publications/dictionaries/cancer-terms](http://www.cancer.gov/publications/dictionaries/cancer-terms)
- National Chemotherapy Advisory Group (2009) Chemotherapy Services in England: Ensuring quality and safety. [Online] Available at: [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)
- NCEPOD: National Confidential Enquiry into Patient Outcome and Death (2008) Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy: For better, for worse? [Online] Available at: [www.ncepod.org.uk](http://www.ncepod.org.uk)
- Oncology e-learning for Nurses: [oncologynursinginpractice.com/](http://oncologynursinginpractice.com/)
- Royal College of Physicians (2023) Acute care toolkit 7: Acute oncology on the acute medical unit. [Online] Available at: [www.rcp.ac.uk/improving-care/resources/acute-care-toolkit-7-acute-oncology-on-the-acute-medicalunit/](http://www.rcp.ac.uk/improving-care/resources/acute-care-toolkit-7-acute-oncology-on-the-acute-medicalunit/)
- Royal College of Physicians (2023) Cancer care at the front door: the future of acute oncology in Wales [Online] Available at: [www.rcp.ac.uk/improving-care/resources/cancer-care-at-the-front-door-the-future-of-acute-oncology-in-wales/](http://www.rcp.ac.uk/improving-care/resources/cancer-care-at-the-front-door-the-future-of-acute-oncology-in-wales/)
- Royal College of Physicians, Association of Cancer Physicians, The Royal College of Radiologists (2020) Acute oncology: increasing engagement and visibility in acute care settings. [Online] Available at: [www.rcp.ac.uk/](http://www.rcp.ac.uk/)
- Society of Acute Medicine: [Online] Available at: [www.acutemedicine.org.uk](http://www.acutemedicine.org.uk)
- UK Acute Oncology Society information hub: [www.ukacuteoncology.co.uk/information-hub](http://www.ukacuteoncology.co.uk/information-hub)
- UK Oncology Nursing Society AOS resources: [www.ukons.org/resources/acute-oncology-services-mig/](http://www.ukons.org/resources/acute-oncology-services-mig/) Including:
  - UKONS Acute Oncology Initial Management Guidelines. Version 4: [ukons.hosting.sundownsolutions.co.uk/](http://ukons.hosting.sundownsolutions.co.uk/)
  - UKONS Telephone Triage Training: [www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/ukons-telephone-triage-training/](http://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/ukons-telephone-triage-training/)
  - UKONS Triage Toolkit: [www.ukons.org/site/assets/files/1134/oncology\\_haematology\\_24\\_hour\\_triage.pdf](http://www.ukons.org/site/assets/files/1134/oncology_haematology_24_hour_triage.pdf)
  - UKONS/Macmillan Primary Care Risk Assessment Tool: [https://www.ukons.org/site/assets/files/1134/oncology\\_haematology\\_24\\_hour\\_triage.pdf](https://www.ukons.org/site/assets/files/1134/oncology_haematology_24_hour_triage.pdf)



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## Appendix 2: Pilot Site Acknowledgements

The CASCADE (Co-design of Acute Oncology Standardised Competence Assessment Documents and their Evaluation) Project team are extremely grateful to all the staff at the following pilot sites for their support and feedback during the evaluation of the Passport documents:

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 Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
 Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
 Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust  
 Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (formerly St Helens and Knowsley)  
 Mount Vernon Cancer Centre – East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust  
 North West Ambulance Service – Greater Manchester  
 University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust  
 Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust  
 Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust  
 The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust  
 University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust  
 South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
 South Warwickshire University NHS Foundation Trust  
 University Hospital Sussex NHS Foundation Trust  
 Velindre Cancer Centre – Velindre University NHS Trust  
 Weston Park Cancer Centre – Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
 York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

# Appendix 3

## Frequently Asked Questions

### How can I download the free PDFs for Passports at Level 2 – 4 from the order portal?

Create an account and at [ukons.myprintdesk.net/](https://ukons.myprintdesk.net/) if ordering bulk copies. Once logged in, when you scroll down to 'Featured Products' you should now see downloadable options for the Passports, add the Levels you require to the basket.

### I'm struggling to access the Level 1 Passport...

If you have just created a Macmillan Learning Hub account, please bear in mind that it may take up to 24 hours before your account is activated and you will be able to access the course. If learners have been allocated study leave at a designated time it may be prudent to check that they have access to the learning hub and the course before this date. Once logged in the Level 1 Passport can be accessed via direct link or via searching for 'Acute Oncology Level 1 Passport' in the search bar. For any other issues or queries about the course, please contact Macmillan directly at [LearningSupportHub@macmillan.org.uk](mailto:LearningSupportHub@macmillan.org.uk)

### Will the Passports be digitalised?

The Level 1 Passport has been digitised with the generous support of Macmillan. There are no immediate plans to digitise the Passports at Practice Levels 2 to 4 but this is something which can potentially be explored in future. For context, the digitisation of the UKONS SACT Passport was a project which required a number of years for planning and development with significant funding commitments.

### When implementing the AO Passports at an organisation, who completes the first 'sign-off'?

Staff leading the implementation of the AO Passports should complete the online Assessor Training ([www.gmccanceracademy.org.uk/courses/acute-oncology-competence-assessment-passport-assessor-online-learning-course/](https://www.gmccanceracademy.org.uk/courses/acute-oncology-competence-assessment-passport-assessor-online-learning-course/)). Staff should then complete either the Level 3 or Level 4 Passport, dependent on their role. Once they have completed the Passport for their own level of practice, assessors may wish to request the Answer Guides for the Level 2 and Level 3 Passports from UKONS at [ukons@media1productions.co.uk](mailto:ukons@media1productions.co.uk)

Assessors may find it helpful to discuss answers with fellow assessors to verify answers demonstrate competence. Referring to the Answer Guide will also be helpful to decide on what is required to demonstrate competence at that level of practice.

You may also find the 'AO Passport Assessor Community of Practice' thread on the UKONS AO discussion forum a useful source of peer support to connect with colleagues and share implementation strategies: [ukons.org/forum/](https://ukons.org/forum/). AO staff at Level 4 working within small organisations may also wish to use this network to connect with peer assessors at other sites.

## Key Contacts

For other queries or feedback, please contact the following:

- For general enquiries about the Framework or Passports please contact the UKONS Acute Oncology Members Interest Group Committee via: [ukons@media1productions.co.uk](mailto:ukons@media1productions.co.uk) or use the contact form on the UKONS website: <https://ukons.org/contact/>
- For queries about the AO Passport Assessor e-learning please contact: [gmcancer.academy@nhs.net](mailto:gmcancer.academy@nhs.net)
- For peer support about Passport Assessor queries or implementing the Passport at your organisation contact colleagues via the UKONS forum: [ukons.org/forum](https://ukons.org/forum)
- Level 1 Passport questions or feedback can be directed to: [LearningSupportHub@macmillan.org.uk](mailto:LearningSupportHub@macmillan.org.uk)
- Print orders and download enquires can be directed to: [ukons@ruddocks.co.uk](mailto:ukons@ruddocks.co.uk)

