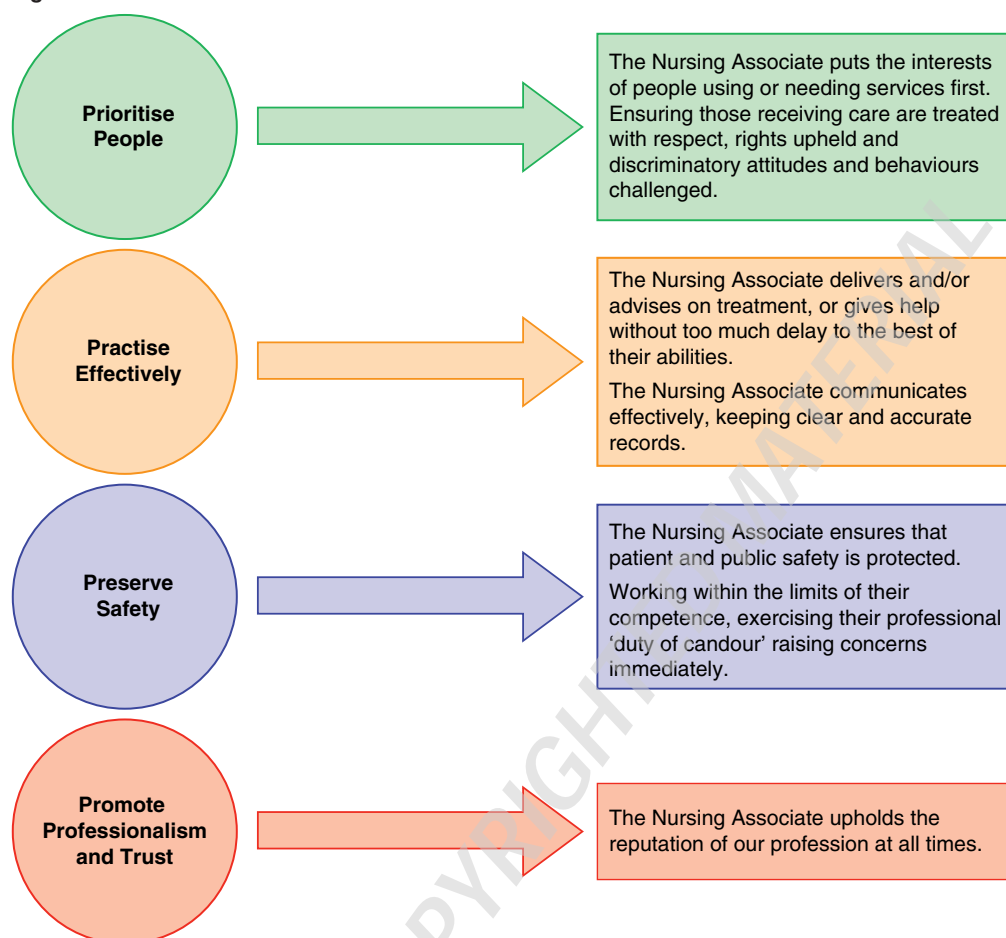


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The Code

At the point of registration, the Nursing Associate will be able to: understand and act in accordance with the Code – professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and Nursing Associates – and fulfil all registration requirements.

Figure 1.1 The Code.



Top Tip

The standards within the Code are what the Nursing Associate commits to when joining or renewing their registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). The professional standards of practice and behaviour are fundamental to being a part of the nursing profession.

The Code

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) functions so as to protect the public. They do this in a number of ways, for example, by ensuring that only those who meet their requirements are permitted to practise as a nurse or midwife in the UK, or in England, as a Nursing Associate. The NMC will take action if there are any concerns raised about whether a Nursing Associate is fit to practise. In serious cases, this action can lead to the Nursing Associate's name being removed from the professional register.

The NMC (2018) publishes its Code of Conduct (The Code. Professional Standards of Practice and Behaviours for Nurses, Midwives and Nursing Associates) setting out common standards of conduct and behaviour for those on the register. This aim of the Code is to provide a clear, consistent and positive message to others including patients, service users and colleagues about what it is that they can expect from the Nursing Associate who provides nursing care. The Code describes the professional standards that Nursing Associates must uphold.

Nursing Associates must act in line with the Code, irrespective of whether they are providing direct care to individual people, groups or communities or they are drawing on their professional knowledge to influence nursing practice in other roles, for example, leadership, education or research. The values and principles in the Code are relevant in a range of practice settings; they are not, however, negotiable or optional.

There are four key themes in the Code (see Figure 1.1). The Code applies to all Nursing Associates regardless of where they are practising, for example, in primary care, community, acute care, with adults, older people, children and young people or in places of detention. The Code is generic in nature in so far as it not applicable to any one specific field of nursing, it pertains to learning disabilities nursing, children and young people's nursing, mental health nursing and adult nursing and across the lifespan. The Nursing Associate may also be working in a social care setting, criminal justice setting, with the homeless, working with families and other agencies; regardless, the Code applies.

Prioritise people

At all times the Nursing Associate is required to ensure that the interests of people using or needing nursing services will come first. The care and safety of people are the Nursing Associate's key concerns;

dignity is to be preserved, and needs are to be acknowledged, assessed and responded to. Those who receive care are to be treated with respect, their rights upheld and discriminatory attitudes and behaviours challenged.

Practise effectively

Care delivery or the provision of advice on treatment or providing help (including preventative or rehabilitative care) must be done without too much delay, to the best of abilities. Care is provided on the basis of the best evidence available and best practice. The Nursing Associate must communicate effectively, maintain clear and accurate records and share skills, knowledge and experience where appropriate. They must reflect and act on any feedback received so as to improve their practice.

Preserve safety

When practising, the Nursing Associate must ensure that patient and public safety is not affected, working within the limits of their competence. Exercise the professional 'duty of candour' and raise concerns without delay whenever there are situations that put patients or public safety at risk. Where appropriate take necessary action to deal with any concerns.

Promote professionalism and trust

The reputation of the profession must be upheld at all times, and the Nursing Associate is required to display a personal commitment to the standards of practice and behaviour set out in the Code. The Nursing Associate should be a model of integrity and leadership that others would wish to aspire to. This should lead to trust and confidence in the profession from patients, people receiving care, other health and care professionals as well as the public.

The NMC provides a framework against which the Nursing Associate practises. The Nursing Associate's primary duty is to the people whom they care and offer support to; actions (or omissions) will be judged against the backdrop of the Code. Nursing Associate is a protected title and may only be used by someone on the NMC's register.