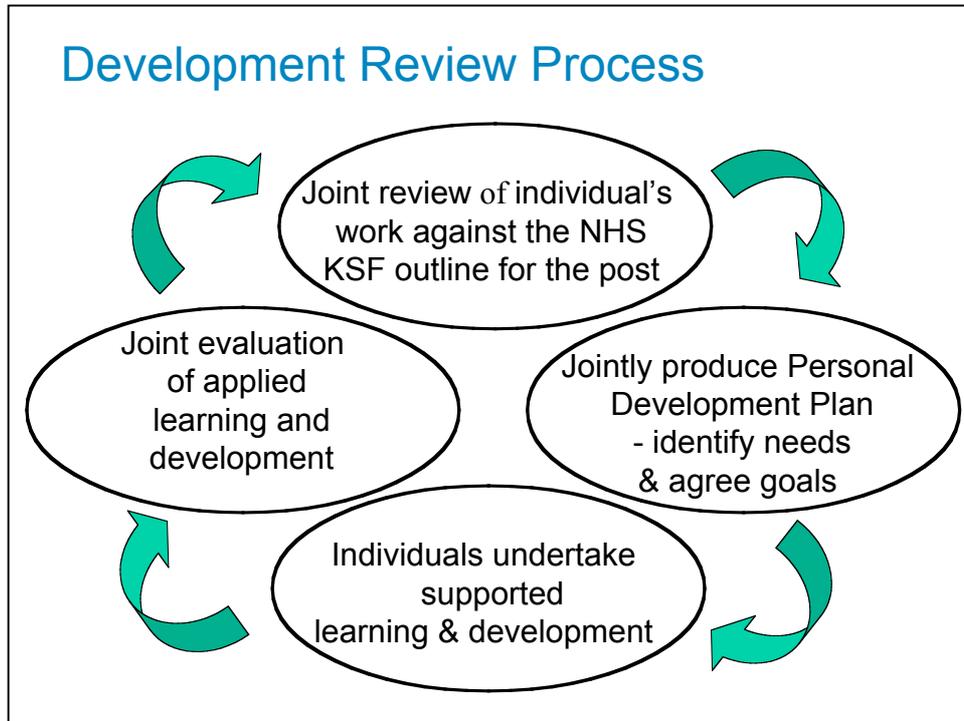


# AGENDA FOR CHANGE

## THE

## THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS FRAMEWORK



### MAIN STRANDS OF AGENDA FOR CHANGE

- Career and Pay Progression - the Knowledge and Skills Framework and Development Review
- Job Evaluation
- Terms and Conditions

Overall there are three main strands to Agenda for Change of which the Knowledge and Skills Framework is one. It is included in the Terms and Conditions agreement and it relates at two gateway points in each of the pay bands. There is more about the gateways and their operation below.

### THE KSF STRUCTURE

The NHS KSF is made up of 30 dimensions. The dimensions identify broad functions that are required by the NHS to enable it to provide a good quality service to the public.

Six of the **dimensions** are core which means they appear in every post. The other 24 dimensions are specific which means they apply to some but not all posts. The specific dimensions are grouped into themes such as Health and Wellbeing, Estates and Facilities, Financial Management and so forth.

Each dimension has four levels although these are not in a hierarchy. Attached to the descriptions of each level are **indicators**, which describe how the knowledge and skills are applied at that level.

Finally, attached to each dimension level and indicators are **examples of application**. These show how the KSF might be applied and they will be jointly developed locally for every post.

## **NHS KSF PRINCIPLES**

- NHS-wide
- Partnership
- Development
- Equity

The development of the KSF has been based on the following principles:

- **NHS-wide** – it is applicable to all staff who work in the NHS across the UK and for all the roles that are undertaken now and in the foreseeable future.
- **Partnership** - the KSF has been developed through partnership working between management and staff-side and is intended to be applied through an ongoing partnership approach.
- **Development** - the purpose of the KSF is to support the development of individuals in their post and in their careers - and through this support the development of the services offered by the NHS to patients and the public.
- **Equity** - the KSF is designed to be an equitable framework that recognises the contribution of all staff to the provision of services. The development review process provides an equitable process for all staff where everyone will be supported to learn and develop throughout their working lives in the NHS.

The NHS KSF and development review process will be used for all staff whether they work full or part time, in the day or evenings.

## **NHS KSF - MAIN PURPOSE**

To provide a NHS-wide framework that can be used consistently across the service to support:

- personal development in post
- career development
- service development

The NHS KSF grew out of the Career and Pay Progression strand of Agenda for Change.

Its purpose is to support the development of individuals in their work and in the post they currently hold, to support individuals' career progression throughout their working

lives, and to facilitate the development of services so that they better meet the needs of patients and the public.

The NHS KSF will be an ongoing focus of the implementation of Agenda for Change. Everyone in the NHS will need to understand the KSF and its use in their own development.

## **HOW IS THE KSF APPLIED?**

### **The Development Review Process**

The Development Review process can be shown in the form of a learning cycle - which has four stages (see diagram on page 1). These stages are as follows:

1. Joint review of work against the demands of the post as detailed in the KSF outline.
2. Jointly produced Personal Development Plans (PDPs) identifying learning and development needs and goals and how these will be met.
3. Learning and development undertaken by the individual supported by their manager.
4. Joint evaluation of learning and development and its application.

One of the common features of all stages of the development review process is the commitment to **partnership throughout**.

The focus of development for individuals relates to the post they are in where they are developing their knowledge and skills and applying these to meet the demands of the post.

Once individuals have shown they meet the demands of the post they are in, at the second gateway, the focus of development will shift to thinking more about career development for those individuals who wish to progress.

The NHS KSF is designed to show the different dimensions and levels in which individuals may wish to progress. The NHS KSF and KSF post outlines are open for all to see, enabling individuals to think about their next potential career steps. Individual PDPs can focus on future career development once they have met the demands of their current post.

For the first time **ALL** NHS staff will have an entitlement to a personal development plan and an annual review of their training needs.

The Personal Development Plan is confidential to the individual and their manager although there will be monitoring of the application of the KSF to ensure there is equal application of the scheme and that equality of opportunity applies throughout.

## **MANAGERS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

During the review process managers have a responsibility to:

- Have regular informal discussions with individual staff members throughout the year so that the individual gets feedback on how they are doing;
- Provide constructive feedback on the individual's work and the individual's development;
- Discuss any issues with the individual's work prior to the formal review meeting.

The whole system is based on the principle of **NO SURPRISES!**

## **KSF AND THE PAY BANDS - GATEWAYS**

The new simplified pay structure has nine pay bands.

The Job Evaluation system determines where jobs are placed on the pay bands. Each of the pay bands has a number of pay points.

The KSF informs individuals' development across the pay bands - career progression.

The KSF also informs peoples' development within the pay bands - pay progression. This occurs at two key points:

**The foundation gateway** - occurs within one year of being appointed to a pay band. The purpose is to check that individuals can meet the basic demands of their post.

**The second gateway** - which is placed towards the top of a pay band - when there is confirmation that individuals are meeting the full demands of their post.

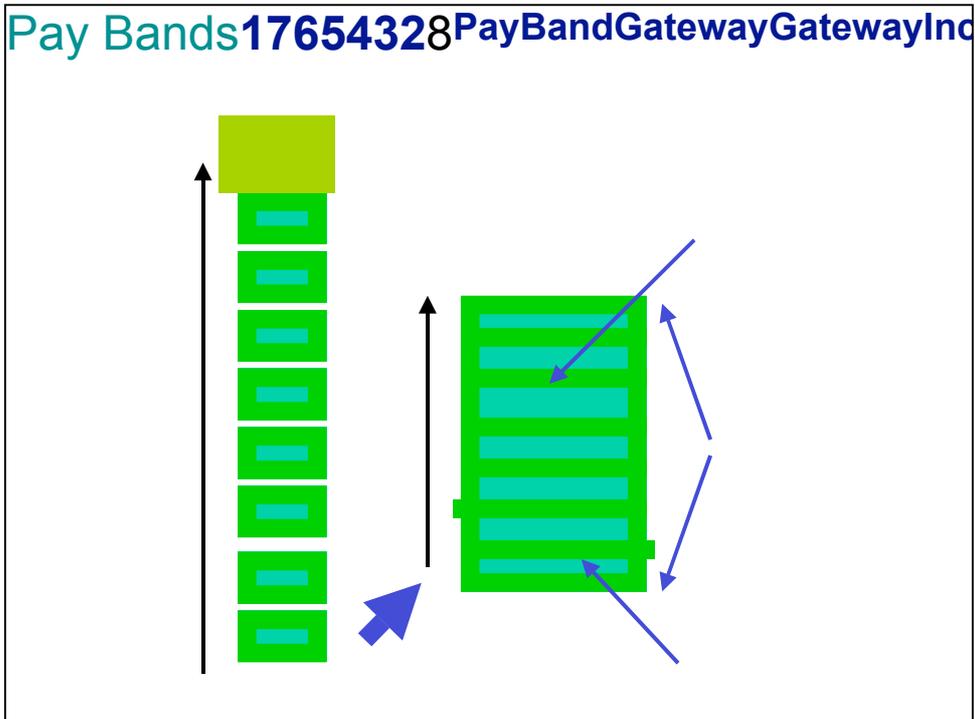
There should be **NO SURPRISES** in the pay band gateway interviews. Any development needs identified during the previous twelve months should be monitored and reviewed prior to the gateway interview and solutions found in time for the normal incremental pay date to be implemented.

The KSF outlines for all posts must be jointly designed in partnership. It is the intention of the scheme that staff progress through the gateways. They are not there to provide a trap for staff.

The training and development required to go through the gateway must be provided. If this is not delivered then the individual is **NOT** held back but will go through the gateway point.

The KSF post outlines and job descriptions will help to focus recruitment and selection by identifying the knowledge and skills that need to be applied in a particular post. They will provide a clear description of the knowledge and skills that individuals appointed to the post will need to possess and apply.

Within the Agenda for Change agreement there is a commitment to two meetings between managers and individuals in the first year of their appointment to a post. The purpose of this is to enhance learning and development in the first year in post and make sure that individuals are getting the support they need in this crucial period.



## IMPLEMENTATION OF KSF WILL INVOLVE

- Thinking about the KSF fit to existing appraisal systems and competencies
- Developing NHS KSF outlines for all posts
- Identifying its impact on existing policies and procedures
- Providing development for all staff
- Monitoring implementation

We know from work with the early implementers that this means that organisations will have to as a minimum:

1. Think about the NHS KSF and development review process fit to their current appraisal systems and any competencies they are using, be these national or local. We also know that at the moment many organisations do not have this information to hand and need to research what is happening on these areas within their organisation.
2. Develop NHS KSF outlines for all posts within the organisation. If the organisation has up-to-date job descriptions this will help but we have found that the information on what people actually do in their posts is very variable.
3. Identify the impact of the NHS KSF and the development review process on existing policies and procedures e.g. maternity leave, recruitment and retention.
4. Have in place systems and structures which support the development of all staff every year throughout their working lives, and which monitor implementation of the NHS KSF to ensure that it is fair for all staff.

## WHAT THE NHS KSF IS NOT

- It does **not** seek to describe the individual or their personality
- It does **not** describe the exact knowledge and skills that people need to develop
- It does **not** determine job weight or pay band
- It is **not** an appraisal system
- It is **not** a pay performance system
- It is **not** a competency framework

It is important to be aware of what the KSF does **not** do as well as what it does.

As the KSF is designed to inform career and pay progression, it does **not** seek to describe what people are like or the particular personal attributes they have.

The KSF does **not** determine job weight or affect the pay band that jobs are placed on - that is the purpose of the job evaluation system.

The KSF is a broad generic framework that focuses on the application of knowledge and skills - it therefore does **not** describe the exact knowledge and skills that people need to develop. More specific standards and competencies would help to do this, as would the learning outcomes of learning programmes.

## RESOURCES:

### **Opportunities for UNISON Training around the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework**

UNISON has developed three courses around the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework:

- **Introduction to the Knowledge & Skills Framework**  
One-Day Course for Activists, Learning Reps and Agenda for Change Reps.
- **Implementing the Knowledge and Skills Framework**  
Two Day Course for Activists.
- **Learning and the KSF in the NHS**  
Two Day Course for Learning Reps and Advisors

These courses are available in your region, talk to your Regional Officer or Regional Education Officer.

### **Further information**

For further information go to the NHS Modernisation Agency website at:

[www.modern.nhs.uk](http://www.modern.nhs.uk)