

March 2002

## AGENDA FOR CHANGE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS FRAMEWORK

### Introduction

1. The *Agenda for Change* negotiations on a new NHS pay system have been underway between the UK Health Departments, representatives of NHS employers and NHS staff organisations for nearly three years. As the talks are being conducted on the basis that "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed", very little information has been released jointly by the negotiators on the new system that is emerging in the talks. This is likely to remain the position during the final stages of the talks now underway.
2. It has however been agreed that some factual information about the proposed system can be made available to NHS managers, provided its status is made clear and it does not prejudice the position of either side in the talks.
3. The following briefing note on part of the new system known as the "Knowledge and Skills Framework" (KSF) has been prepared on this basis.

### Background

4. The White Paper *Agenda for Change* said that the Government would work in social partnership with unions and employers to develop guidance on, amongst other things, how staff can move up new pay spines dependent upon the demonstration of applying increasing levels of knowledge and satisfactory performance.
5. A "Knowledge and Skills Framework" or KSF is being developed to support the consistent application of standards for all jobs in the NHS. It has strong links with a number of other skills based initiatives such as the lifelong learning<sup>1</sup> framework in England and it will be important in developing a workforce focused on delivering patient centred care and service improvements. The KSF does not seek to replicate existing work – for example on National Occupational Standards – but rather to provide a common framework which unites existing initiatives with local standards in a way which supports consistent development and appraisal of staff, as they move around the service. Our aim is to produce a common way of describing applied knowledge and skills that could be used for any post in the NHS, and which gives employers and staff a common currency for use in recruitment and development.

### Progress

6. Whilst at the outset this aim was seen as highly ambitious, a great deal of progress has been made. A group of NHS managers, representatives of staff organisations and civil servants was formed last year to design the framework, with help from external experts in the field. Maximum use has been made of existing work (for example, on National Occupational Standards, QAA benchmarks and regulatory frameworks). A draft is expected to be available in March, after which there will be a period of testing with front-line managers and staff (similar to earlier testing of the Job Evaluation Scheme).
7. The outline attached reflects the work of the group to date, and although it is still at a fairly early stage of development and is likely to be the subject of further change depending on the outcome of negotiations, it is being shared now to:-

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<sup>1</sup> Reference "Working Together – Learning Together" – A framework for Lifelong Learning in the NHS

- ❑ Inform employers of its existence, particularly those who are considering developing competence frameworks and who may wish to await the national KSF or those currently developing competency frameworks who would wish to ensure their work sits comfortably with the national KSF; and
- ❑ Encourage employers to comment on the work to date with a view to improving the KSF.

### **Using the KSF**

8. The expectation is that although in practise the KSF is a large document, locally management and staff will only access the element relevant to their use. It is envisaged that a computerised tool will be developed to support management and staff in agreeing and applying common descriptions of knowledge and skills to both their current jobs and also when planning future job roles, through an informed development and appraisal process.
9. To do this the KSF describes a number of "*dimensions*" of knowledge and skills. Some, which are expected to be relevant to all NHS jobs, are described as "core", for example "oral communication". All staff need communication skills although the level of skill required will vary between different types of job. Other dimensions, such as "research and evaluation", will apply to some jobs but not others. These are known as "specific" dimensions.
10. Each dimension has "*level descriptors*" with further detail relating to them - these describe the generally recognised steps in extending and applying knowledge and skills in an NHS environment. Across the KSF we aim to have a common language between the dimensions and levels and this should link easily to existing national and most local frameworks. An overview of the work to date on the draft KSF is attached. The synopsis document is a condensed version of what is a much longer document. It is likely to be the subject of further change depending on the outcome of negotiations. In the more detailed document the level descriptors will be further supported by a number of criteria, which will clarify which level descriptor applies to any particular post.

### **Next Steps**

11. Over the next few months the Knowledge and Skills Framework group will continue to test the KSF against real jobs in the NHS. After agreement on Agenda for Change is reached, further refinement of the KSF will take place in a number of early implementer sites.

### **Further Information**

12. If you have any comments on the KSF at this stage please contact Julie Badon directly on [julie.badon@doh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:julie.badon@doh.gsi.gov.uk) or Gary Theobald on [gary.theobald@doh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:gary.theobald@doh.gsi.gov.uk)

**KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS FRAMEWORK DRAFT 5 – Synopsis document**

DIMENSIONS	Level Descriptors				
	A	B	C	D	E
<b>CORE - will relate to all NHS posts</b>					
<b>1 Communication</b>	Establish and maintain effective communication with people on routine and operational matters	Establish and maintain effective communication with people about routine and daily activities overcoming any differences in communication between the people involved	Establish and maintain effective communication with individuals and groups about difficult or complex matters overcoming any problems in communication	Establish and maintain effective communication with various individuals and groups on complex potentially stressful topics in a range of situations	
<b>2 Personal and people development</b>	Contribute to own personal development	Develop own skills and knowledge and provide information to others to help their development	Develop own skills and knowledge and contribute to the development of others	Develop knowledge and practice in an area of work	Develop own and others' knowledge and practice across professional and organisational boundaries
<b>3 Health, safety and security</b>	Maintain own health, safety and security	Monitor and maintain health, safety and security of self and others in own work area	Promote best practice in health, safety and security	Develop a working environment and culture that actively improves health, safety and security	
<b>4 Service development</b>	Assist in maintaining and developing services	Contribute to the implementation of services	Contribute to the development of services	Lead the development and improvement of services	
<b>5 Quality</b>	Ensure own actions help to maintain quality	Ensure own actions promote quality and alert others to quality issues	Contribute to quality improvement	Lead quality improvement	
<b>6 Equality, diversity and rights</b>	Ensure own actions support equality, diversity and rights	Support people's equality, diversity and rights	Promote people's equality, diversity and rights	Enable individuals and groups to exercise their rights and promote their equality and diversity	

<b>DIMENSIONS</b>		<b>Level Descriptors</b>				
<b>7</b>	<b>Assessment of health and wellbeing needs</b>	Assist in assessing individuals' health and wellbeing and related needs	Assess the health and wellbeing needs of people whose needs are relatively stable and consistent with others in the caseload	Assess people's health and wellbeing needs when those needs are complex and change across the caseload	Lead and develop assessment practice	
<b>8</b>	<b>Addressing individuals' health and wellbeing needs</b>	Assist in delivering programmes of care to meet individuals' health and wellbeing needs	Assist in planning, delivering and evaluating programmes to meet people's health and wellbeing needs	Plan, deliver and evaluate programmes to address people's health and wellbeing needs which are relatively stable and consistent with others in the caseload	Plan, deliver and evaluate programmes to address people's health and wellbeing needs	Lead and develop care practice
<b>9</b>	<b>Promotion of health and wellbeing</b>	Contribute to raising awareness of health and wellbeing	Raise awareness of health and wellbeing and the actions that people can take to address issues	Promote health and wellbeing through programmes	Promote health and wellbeing of communities and populations through policies and strategies	
<b>10</b>	<b>Protection of health and wellbeing</b>	Assist in monitoring and protecting groups and individuals whose health and wellbeing may be at risk	Monitor the health and wellbeing of groups and individuals and contribute to protecting those groups and individuals whose health and wellbeing is at risk	Protect people whose health and wellbeing is at risk	Lead and develop practice in protection from risk	
<b>11</b>	<b>Logistics</b>	Assist with the control and movement of people and goods	Control and move people and goods	Plan, monitor and evaluate the control and movement of people and goods	Lead and develop the control and movement of people and goods	
<b>12</b>	<b>Data processing and management</b>	Input data	Modify and structure data	Process and manage data and information	Lead the processing and management of data and information	

<b>DIMENSIONS</b>				
<b>Level Descriptors</b>				
<b>13 Production and communication of information and knowledge</b>	Collect, collate and report routine and simple data and information	Analyze, interpret and report factual data and information	Analyze, interpret and report information and knowledge related to ideas and concepts	Analyze, synthesise and present knowledge and information about complex subjects and concepts to influence key decisions

DIMENSIONS		Level Descriptors				
14	Facilities maintenance and management	Prepare and maintain facilities and associated products by hand	Prepare and maintain facilities and associated products using equipment and by hand	Develops and maintains facilities and associated products	Lead the development and management of facilities and associated products	
15	Design and production of equipment, devices and visual records	Assist in the production of equipment, devices and visual records	Design, produce and modify simple equipment, devices and visual records	Design, produce and modify complex equipment, devices and visual records	Lead the design and production of equipment, devices and visual records	
16	Biomedical investigation and reporting	Perform routine tests and tasks related to investigations and reporting	Analyse and test biomedical samples	Plan, analyse, assess and report on biomedical samples	Design, apply and monitor new investigate methods and processes for biomedical samples	
17	Application of technology for measurement, monitoring and treatment	Assist in the application of technology for measurement, monitoring and treatment	Apply technology for measurement, monitoring and treatment	Plan, monitor and quality assure the application of technology for measurement, monitoring and treatment	Develop, monitor and review new instrumentation and equipment for applying technology for measurement, monitoring and treatment	
18	Partnership	Participate in joint working with other workers, agencies and communities	Develop and sustain effective working relationships with other workers, agencies	Develop, sustain and evaluate collaborative approaches with other workers, agencies and communities	Enable workers, agencies and communities to work collaboratively and in partnership	
19	Leadership	Influences the development of knowledge, ideas and work practice	Leads others in the development of knowledge, ideas and work practice	Lead work teams in the development of knowledge, ideas and work practice	Lead multi-agency teams and communities in the development of knowledge, ideas and work practice	
20	Management of people	Supervise the work of a team	Plan, assess and provide feedback to teams and individuals on their work	Allocate, coordinate, monitor and assess the work of teams and individuals	Delegate work to others	
21	Management of physical and	Maintain and support the	Plan, obtain and deploy	Determine the effective	Secure physical and	

DIMENSIONS	Level Descriptors				
	financial resources	efficient use of physical and financial resources	physical and financial resources	use of physical and financial resources	financial resources and establish strategies for their use
22 Research and development		Assist with research and development	Lead on a specific aspect of a research and development project	Plan, coordinate and evaluate research and development	Lead and improve research and development activities across a number of projects

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