

KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS FRAMEWORK (KSF)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

Section 1 - 8

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The Frequently Asked Questions will be added to as KSF Develops

Section 1

What is KSF and how does it affect me ?

WHAT IS THE KSF AND HOW DOES IT AFFECT ME?

1. What is the KSF?

KSF stands for the Knowledge and Skills Framework. It is a framework to support personal development and career progression within the NHS. It applies to all staff except Board members, Doctors and Dentists as they did not come under the Agenda for Change Pay Negotiations. It is one of the three key strands of Agenda for Change. These are:

- The NHS KSF and the development review process
- Job evaluation, and
- Terms and conditions.

2. What is the purpose of the KSF?

The NHS KSF and the development review process is about lifelong learning. The Agenda for Change national agreement includes a commitment to introduce a system of annual development reviews and to create development opportunities for all staff. Everyone will have their own Personal Development Plan (PDP) – developed jointly in discussion with their manager or reviewer, and everyone will have an annual development review. The KSF is designed to ensure that staff are supported so that they can be effective in their jobs. It also gives them opportunities to progress and develop through their time working in the NHS.

3. What will the KSF do?

The NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework is designed to do six things:

1. identify the knowledge and skills that an individual needs to apply in their job – this is described in an NHS KSF post outline
2. help identify any gap between the knowledge and skills needed in the job and the current knowledge and skills of the individual
3. if there is a gap help to identify the learning and development that is needed to close it
4. provide a system of pay progression across the service based on a single agreed system
5. help individuals develop throughout their careers
6. help in the development of services by linking what the NHS needs for effective service delivery with the knowledge and skills needed in specific posts and enabling the people in those posts to develop that knowledge and skills.

4. How does it affect me?

Each NHS post will have a KSF outline - this describes the knowledge and skills that need to be applied in a post. At least once a year you and your manager will review how you are applying knowledge and skills against the KSF outline. From this you will both develop and agree a Personal Development Plan for you to guide your learning and development for the year ahead.

5. How will the KSF benefit me?

The KSF will benefit you in a number of ways. Firstly the Agenda for Change Agreement gives a commitment to your ongoing learning and development throughout your working life. When you are first employed in any new post, the development will focus on helping you develop the knowledge and skills needed for the post in which you are employed. When you are fully developed in your post, your development can focus on your longer term career – if you want to do this. You will also get regular feedback from your manager on what is going well and where there are areas for development and support to develop when services change. The principle of the system is 'no surprises' meaning that ongoing support for your development.

The KSF also shows the knowledge and skills that need to be applied right across the NHS. All KSF post outlines in an organisation will be available for all staff to look at – so you can use this to think about career development opportunities in your current type of work, or perhaps in other areas of work that you had not previously thought of.

6. Will the NHS KSF have an effect on which pay band my post is placed?

No. The KSF has no effect on which pay band you go onto. This is done through job matching and job evaluation.

7. What sorts of things are covered by KSF?

The KSF is made up of 30 dimensions which describe the main functions that the NHS needs to provide a good quality service to the public. There are **6 core dimensions** which apply to everyone who works in the NHS such as communication and quality. There are a further **24 specific dimensions** covering a wide variety of work. Some relate to Health and Wellbeing and related needs, some relate to Information and Knowledge, others cover Estates and Facilities, and then are a number of more General dimensions including management, learning and development, and marketing.

8. How is the KSF structured?

Each of the 30 dimensions in the KSF occurs at four levels. The levels describe the increasing demands of how people have to apply knowledge and skills in the dimensions concerned. Attached to each level are a few indicators which give more information about how knowledge and skills needs to be applied at that level. The dimensions, levels and indicators are fixed and need to be used together to describe the requirements for particular posts. As well as the dimensions levels and indicators there are examples of application which show how the KSF might be applied to different NHS posts. The examples are just for illustration – they need to be changed to be relevant to the work you do locally.

9. How does KSF fit with the rest of the AfC arrangements?

The NHS KSF is the driver for career, service and pay progression within Agenda for Change. It is designed to inform your development in post and throughout

your career It is also designed to help NHS organisations ensure that the services they deliver meet the needs of the public and link this to what they need people to do in the service.

Section 2

Pay and Pay Progression

PAY AND PAY PROGRESSION

1. What are the pay gateways?

In most years pay progression will take the form of an annual increase in pay from one pay point within a payband to the next as there is a normal expectation of progression. At two defined points in paybands – which are called gateways – decisions are made about pay progression as well as development.

2. What is the difference between the two gateways?

The foundation gateway always takes place one year after joining a payband (regardless of incremental point). The second gateway is set at a specific point towards the top of paybands – you need to refer to the KSF Handbook (or the Agenda for Change Agreement) to see where this is for the payband that your post has been placed in.

3. What is the purpose of the foundation gateway?

The purpose of the foundation gateway is to check that individuals can apply the basic knowledge and skills required from the outset in a post coupled with that needed after 12 months development and support.

4. Why do we need a second gateway?

The purpose of the second gateway is to confirm that individuals are applying their knowledge and skills consistently to meet the full demands of their post – as set out in the full NHS KSF outline for that post.

5. Does this mean that everyone is going to get a foundation gateway one year after being assimilated?

No. The foundation gateways will not apply when staff are first assimilated across from the current pay system to the new integrated paybands.

6. If I move jobs after I have been assimilated and my new job is on another payband, will I then have to have a foundation gateway in my new job?

Yes you will have a foundation gateway in that new payband. New staff appointed to the NHS will also have foundation gateways.

7. What is the difference between a KSF outline for the foundation gateway and one for the second gateway?

The foundation gateway outline for a post is a subset of the full NHS KSF post outline (used at the second gateway). As the foundation gateway focuses on the basic knowledge and skills that staff need to apply in the post and after one year of development and support, the foundation gateway outline for a post identifies these essential aspects. All of the dimensions that appear in the full KSF post outline have to appear in the foundation gateway outline. But the foundation gateway might:

- be set at a lower level of the dimension, or
- some of the indicators might be reduced for the foundation gateway, or

- there might be fewer areas of application for that post after one year, or
- it might be a combination of these things.

The second gateway is based on the full KSF post outline.

8. Does this mean that my Foundation Gateway could be made more difficult for me than for someone else in my post?

No. Both Foundation and Second Gateways are based on KSF post outlines – these apply to the post and not the person. So anyone who is in that post would be reviewed against the same outline.

9. I am a regulated healthcare professional who is subject to a preceptorship year, does this mean that I will have two foundation gateways?

No. Within the first 12 months of employment you will have two development reviews. The first review after 6 months will seek to establish whether you are on track in your development towards the foundation gateway and if this is the case you will receive your incremental point. At 12 months your second development review will focus on the KSF foundation outline for your post and this will be your foundation gateway. When you pass through this foundation gateway, you will move up to the next point on the payband. Like everyone else you will only have one foundation gateway and only one foundation gateway review.

10. I am a midwife and I know that I will move to payband 6 on the basis of accelerated progression. Will this have an impact on my foundation gateway review?

No. Your preceptorship will assist you in developing and applying your knowledge and skills. Your foundation gateway review will take place when you have been in post for 12 months as with every other member of staff.

11. Do some staff groups have three gateways ie a subset of the foundation outline for band 5 staff?

No. There are just two gateways for all groups of staff. However all staff should have two reviews in their first year in post to support their development.

12. Why do all KSF outlines need to be completed by October 2005? As the gateways only have to become active from 1st Oct 2006 there is no reason why someone could not have their initial development review against agreed KSF outline by 30th Sept 2006 and subsequent gateway review by 30th Sept 2007 – or have I got that wrong?

Yes you have! The focus of KSF outlines is posts and not the people in those posts and the implementation target focuses on getting all post outlines completed for the posts in your organisation.

13. I have been assimilated above the second gateway, does this mean I don't need to bother with my KSF post outline?

No. Your KSF post outline is just as relevant to you as it is to anyone else in that post. If you are assimilated above the second gateway, the pay progression

gateway will not apply but you will still have a development review every year and this will include consideration of any development needs you have in the post using the KSF post outline as the basis. If you do not have an development needs within your post that year, then there might be more focus on your career development. In many ways this will be no different from what will happen when the system has been operating for a while as individuals will need to maintain their knowledge and skills in a post as things change around them (eg legislation, technology). In the short term it is possible that more development needs might be identified for those above the second gateway in relation to their post - although no doubt that will depend on factors such as the appraisal system in place already and the amount of support these individuals have been given in their development in the past.

14. My organisation wants to use other things, such as qualifications or other competences, for the second gateway rather than the NHS KSF, can it do this? No. It cannot do this. The National Agreement specifies that it is the NHS KSF, and it alone, that forms the basis of the second gateway. Qualifications and other competences, for example, may be used as evidence towards the achievement of the dimensions and levels if it is agreed and applicable to that post but they cannot be used in place of the NHS KSF.

15. If you are very efficient and meet your full KSF post outline very quickly, is it possible to jump up your payband and go through your second gateway? No. You will progress up the payband in the same way. However if you and your manager agree that you are fully meeting the demands of the post as described in the KSF post outline, your learning and development can focus on your career rather than the post. You can, of course, apply for jobs in a higher payband if they become available and the fact that you have developed quickly in your current post will no doubt be looked on favourably.

16. If you are at the top of you pay band is your pay frozen? Your pay is not frozen as such you are just at the top of the pay band for that post – exactly the same as would happen now. If you want to move onto the next payband you would need to apply and be selected for a post on the next payband.

17. If my performance is better than my KSF Outline will I be moved up to the next payband? No. The KSF Outline is what is required by your organisation from staff in your post. If you perform above the outline, it shows what you are capable of doing and you will be able to use this as evidence in applying for a new post, informing your career development etc.

18. If I don't perform at the level described in the KSF outline for my post, what will happen to me?

You and your manager will agree a development plan to help you learn and develop in those areas where you have specific development needs for your post. From the time you are appointed onto a payband until you reach your second gateway having some development needs will not be considered unusual i.e. most people will need to time to develop in a post before they can apply all of the necessary knowledge and skills for that post. If at your second gateway however, you are not able to apply the knowledge and skills to meet the full KSF outline for your post and this has been discussed with you before, then you will not progress through the second gateway until you are able to do so. This will be the exception rather than the norm as it is expected that individuals will be given opportunities and support to develop over time. NHS organisations will still have capability procedures, as they do now, for situations when there are real issues.

19. If an individual is not successful at a gateway review and their pay progression is stopped for a while, is their pay then backdated to the original incremental date, is their incremental date changed to the date at which they were deemed to have progressed, or do they wait until 12 months have passed? If it is agreed to defer pay progression as the individual has not applied the knowledge and skills detailed in the KSF post outline for that gateway, then individuals will stay on that incremental point until it is agreed that they are able to do so. So, for example, if it takes someone 7 months to develop and apply the required knowledge and skills for that gateway, their pay will be held at that rate for the first seven months and then increased for the final 5 months of that year. Essentially their pay progression will resume from the point when they do apply the requisite knowledge and skills. Pay will not be backdated in these circumstances as the individual was not able to meet the required level of knowledge and skills.

20. Can pay progression be deferred at incremental pay points other than gateways?

Yes but only on exceptional grounds (as outlined in AfC Agreement 6.22 and 6.23). These exceptional grounds are no different than what has been previously available under Whitley.

21. What happens with regard to gateways if someone moves to a different NHS employer but stays in the same payband?

The KSF is designed to be NHS wide across the UK so this means that one NHS employer should accept the position on the payband from another NHS employer.

22. What if the NHS KSF outline for my post has lots of dimensions at high levels, surely this will mean that I will be paid more?

No. It is the job evaluation system that determines where your post is placed on the paybands. Trying to alter the payband you are on by arguing for more dimensions at higher levels in your KSF post outline will have no effect on your pay. In fact it is likely to make life harder as you will have to meet all of the

dimensions and levels in the post outline to progress through the second gateway.

23. But is there a relationship between what your KSF post outline looks like and the payband you are on?

Yes there is in the sense that people in the higher paybands are likely to have more dimensions at higher levels in their KSF post outlines. This is to be expected as to be paid more people have to apply their knowledge and skills in increasingly complex and demanding ways. However the KSF post outline will not be used for job matching and job evaluation purposes. It is also possible that some jobs on the higher paybands have some dimensions at level 1 within them.

24. I'm confused about pay progression, how do the gateways and increments work?

The KSF forms the basis of pay progression within your payband. There are two gateway points within each payband. The foundation gateway occurs after one year in post at whatever point you were placed on the payband. The second gateway is at a fixed point towards the top of the payband. The second gateway is about confirming that you can apply the knowledge and skills necessary when you are fully developed in that post as described in the KSF outline for that post. The foundation gateway is about checking after your first year in post that you are on the right track in your development and are being supported in post. The foundation gateway is formed from a subset of the whole KSF post outline – it sets out what you need to do in the first year of appointment to that post. Other than that the incremental points within the paybands are automatic. However you will have a review with your manager every year to see how you are developing and applying your knowledge and skills and to develop and agree a new Personal Development Plan. The reviews you get at gateways and at incremental points on the scale are very similar.

25. Once I get to the top of my payband will I automatically progress on to the next pay band?

No. Just like now you won't automatically go on to a new pay band when you reach the top of your current one. You would need to apply and gain a post that is placed on the higher payband. If you believe you have developed the job that you are to such a significant extent that it might fall on to the new payband, then you could seek to have the post job evaluated.

26. Are the gateways a barrier to pay progression?

No the gateways are not designed to act as a barrier to pay progression: they are there to ensure that there is a stronger focus on the development of essential knowledge and skills needed for NHS jobs. The Agenda for Change agreement makes it clear that there is a normal expectation of progression through both gateways as individuals move through to the top of the payband in annual increments.

Section 3

KSF Post Outlines

KSF POST OUTLINES

1. What is a KSF post outline?

A KSF post outline is based on your job description and sets out the KSF dimensions, levels, indicators and areas of application that are applicable to your post.

2. How will I know what my KSF Outline is?

A KSF Outline will be developed for every NHS post. This development needs to take place in partnership between managers and representatives of staff. Each NHS organisation is responsible for deciding exactly how this will be done in its own organisation and the timing for every staff member. However by the end of October 2005 you should have a KSF outline for your post.

3. What about part-time staff?

Every member of staff in the NHS regardless of the hours worked, and bank staff whose pay comes under Agenda for Change, will have a KSF post outline for their job and be supported in achieving it in their development.

4. I have two part-time jobs in the NHS, does this mean I will have two KSF post outlines?

Yes – you will have a KSF post outline for each post you undertake (how ever many hours you work in that post). The post outline describes the knowledge and skills you need to apply in that post when you are fully developed in that role.

5. How can I find out what the KSF is for my job as a neonatal staff nurse?

There is no centrally determined KSF post outline for neonatal staff nurses – or any other posts in the NHS. The KSF is a common UK and NHS-wide framework for organisations to use to describe what they want a neonatal staff nurse to do. The KSF will help provide consistency across NHS organisations and this is helped by a National Library of KSF post outlines that organisations and individuals can use as a resource. However to ensure that organisations can deliver the services needed for their own local population, it is possible for organisations to agree in partnership between managers and staff that there are particular things that need to be done in a particular post (such as neonatal staff nurse) which are not needed in that post in another organisation.

6. If the KSF is a broad framework, how does it help me in my post?

KSF post outlines set out the knowledge and skills that need to be applied in a post in the NHS through using KSF dimensions, levels and indicators. To develop a full KSF outline for a post, it is necessary to describe the exact areas in which the KSF need to be applied for that particular post. For example, both nurses and speech and language therapists might use the same KSF dimensions related to Health and Wellbeing but they each have specific skills. These need to be described in the areas of application in the post outline. The KSF dimensions and levels show broadly what the posts have in common and how these posts

help in delivering services. However it is the detail in the areas of application that states the specific contributions of those posts to services. The KSF outline for the post in which you are employed will help inform your development through describing these links clearly for you.

7. Can management try and impose KSF outlines upon staff?

No. KSF post outlines must be developed in partnership either between individuals and line managers, or by representative sample of the workforce and managers, or by KSF leads at Trust level, post-holders and managers. This reflects the partnership approach that is taken throughout Agenda for Change. There is also a very practical reason for doing this in partnership – it is only by involving people who manage the post and those who undertake it that it is possible to get a full understanding of a post.

8. My managers say there isn't time to develop KSF post outlines in partnership as there are Agenda for Change targets to achieve. What can I do?

Essentially this is a very short-term approach that will make it much more difficult and time-consuming next year. Experience from the Early Implementer sites has shown real benefits of involving people in developing KSF post outlines in partnership – both in people gaining a greater understanding of their own posts and also understanding how they fit into teams.

9. How will we know that the KSF outlines in my organisation are consistent?

All organisations are setting up mechanisms for checking the consistency of KSF outlines within and across departments. This is likely to be led by the Agenda for Change KSF group in the organisation. In addition NHS organisations can use the KSF National Library found on the e-ksf (www.e-ksf.org) to check consistency with other organisations. KSF post outlines don't need to be exactly the same in different organisations or even for similar posts in different departments in the same organisations. This is because it is quite appropriate for posts to have a different focus to meet the needs of patients and the public.

10. Can staff undertake KSF if not assimilated onto pay band?

There is no reason why the development of KSF post outlines and starting the development review process cannot happen before assimilation. However, each organisation needs to decide where it wishes to focus its energies first. Some organisations prefer to start with job evaluation and assimilation and then move onto KSF. Others are starting some staff groups with one and other staff groups with the other and then changing over. By October 2005 everyone employed in the NHS should have a KSF outline for their post and have had their first review and Personal Development Plan informed by the KSF. This is because pay progression has to be fully in place in the service by October 2006 and staff need to have had time to develop their knowledge and skills before they reach a gateway.

11. What if the NHS KSF is not able to describe my post / a post in my department?

This is extremely unlikely. The NHS KSF has been tested across the service with a wide range of staff groups. In addition detailed work has been undertaken on mapping existing competences to working drafts of the NHS KSF. As a result the NHS KSF has been improved and is now designed to be suitable for all staff groups.

12. What if I can't see my job clearly in the dimensions?

As the NHS KSF is a broad generic framework this is not surprising. It is impossible for such a framework to use the terms and titles that everyone in the NHS uses on a day-to-day basis. You might find the 'Where to find it' guide in Appendix 3 of the KSF Guidance book a useful starting point for finding where your work fits. If you cannot find it there, then talk to someone who has the lead on the KSF in your organisation as they should be able to help you.

13. What if my organisation wants to add on its own dimensions and/or use its own competences instead of the NHS KSF. Can it do this?

No. The National Agreement, which has been carefully negotiated over a number of years, relates to the use of the NHS KSF as the basis of career and pay progression. If your organisation finds consistent problems with using the NHS KSF for one or more staff groups then it should alert the Staff Council to the problem. It cannot just change the National Agreement locally.

14. What if I have a National / Scottish Vocational Qualification at level 3. Does this mean that all of the dimensions for my post will be at level 3?

No. NHS KSF post outlines identify the dimensions and the levels that are appropriate for different posts in the NHS. This means that posts will often have dimensions at a number of different levels. For example, a post might have the vast majority of the relevant dimensions at level 4, and then also have another dimension at level 2 and one dimension at level 1. The levels in the KSF have been designed specifically for the NHS – they do not equate to levels in any other frameworks.

Section 4

Developing NHS KSF Post Outlines

DEVELOPING NHS KSF POST OUTLINES

1. What if current job descriptions and information on the post does not cover some of the core dimensions, can they be left off?

No. The core dimensions must appear in the NHS KSF outline for all posts. The core dimensions in the NHS KSF form a key part of work in the NHS and this is reflected in the Agenda for Change National Agreement. All 6 core dimensions have to be in every NHS KSF post outline at least at level 1.

2. What if individuals hold responsibilities in the organisation that are wider than their specific work posts, for example, trade union representatives or supervisors of midwives?

NHS KSF post outlines describe what is needed in the post in which people are employed, they do not describe the specific knowledge and skills that individuals bring to that post or the additional knowledge and skills they develop by undertaking other roles – this would happen at the next stage when individuals are reviewed against the demands of the post.

3. How do we develop KSF post outlines where there has been grade compression into one payband?

Organisations need to think through carefully the purpose of the posts for which they are developing KSF outlines and how this links to the effective delivery of services. This is particularly true where what were two posts have been placed on the same payband. One of the purposes of Agenda for Change is to support the development of services in the interests of the public, the development of KSF post outlines provides the opportunity to debate what the organisation really wants from a particular post when someone is fully developed in that role – the full KSF post outline. It is also the opportunity to stand back and think about how to effectively support people's development over time.

4. Is there any backfill money available to support service delivery whilst we are developing KSF post outlines?

It is unlikely that backfill money will be available but you need to talk to the KSF Lead in your organisation about any particular arrangements that are being made locally.

5. Is there an average time that it takes to produce KSF post outlines?

No not really as it depends on a number of factors such as how clear people and the organisation about what is needed in that post, the information that is already available on it, its complexity etc. Lessons from the Early Implementers are however that people learn best about the KSF through using it and that a good way to get going is to give people a short introduction and then get them involved in developing an example of a post outline. It is also helpful to let people practise on developing an outline for a post that they know nothing about as then they don't have an emotional ties to that post. Once people have got used to using the KSF – and again this has been found to be user-friendly – then the process can

be quite quick in getting some nearly complete drafts produced. These then need to be checked by all the relevant people before being finalised.

6. We have been working within and assisting development of an integrated multidisciplinary Intermediate care service for the past year which involves some really innovative approaches to work. We have been unable to find any profiles which match or resemble our role. Please could you advise us of the best way forward?

The first thing to establish is whether you mean KSF post outlines or Job Evaluation Profiles. For Job Profiles you would need to find the profiles that may match your posts in Job Evaluation Terms (eg Community Nurse, Specialist Nurse) and take it from there – you will need to seek further advice on this from the JE team.

If you mean KSF post outlines, you could look on the National Library housed on the e-ksf (www.e-ksf.org) to see if there is any similar post that you look at to give you some ideas or as a starter for 10. However if you have a really innovative post you are probably better using the KSF handbook – with some help from your KSF lead – and developing KSF post outlines for this post from scratch.

7. Did Early Implementer sites use all of the methods outlined in the training programme to develop outlines and how effective was each method?

Yes the guidance in the handbook was developed with the early implementer sites. The key thing is to find a method that works for you and your organisation. You don't have to use only one method in your organisation, different methods might be more appropriate for different staff groups.

Section 5

The Development Review

THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

1. What if the individual member of staff and their reviewer agree that the individual is not applying their knowledge and skills across all of the demands of their job but is concentrating their efforts on one or more areas to the detriment of others?

Then the individual and their line manager need to agree how this will be addressed in the year ahead – and identify whether this is happening by the individual making the choice or it is under management pressure to deliver in some areas more than others.

2. What if the individual and their reviewer are unable to reach agreement?

If the individual member of staff and their reviewer cannot agree, either one has the right to seek support on an informal local basis from a third party, such as the line manager of the reviewer, someone from the human resource department, or a trade union learning representative. This third person may seek further information from either the reviewer and/or the individual member of staff. They will look at the information from both and come to an objective decision that is non-discriminatory. If the informal process cannot address the problem, then the individual member of staff can take their case through local grievance procedures. If pay has been withheld, then if the individual's case is upheld pay will be back-dated to the point at which pay progression should have occurred. This should be the exception rather than the rule as one of the principles of the system is that it is based on 'No Surprises'.

3. What happens if my manager and I don't agree?

The KSF system brings managers and staff closer together through regular feedback; this in itself will reduce the chance of disagreements. If you and your manager cannot agree, support and advice is available to you both from your trade union and human resource representatives. If it is still impossible to get agreement, then you can use the grievance procedure available in your organisation.

4. What if there are issues in the work team that are having a negative effect on the individual's work?

First of all it is advisable for the individual should talk to his/her manager outside of a KSF development review. If during the development review process the reviewer realises that this is happening then they will need to address the issues in the team either directly or through seeking support from others.

5. What if there are organisational issues (eg with resources) that are adversely affecting the individual's work and/or their learning and development?

The reviewer will need to note this in the review documents and address the issues directly or through taking them up with other managers as the same issues are likely to be affecting other people in the organisation.

6. What should be the ratio for reviewer/reviewee – is it 1:6; 1:10 1:12.?

It is up to organisations to decide what is most effective for its managers and staff. However thoughtful consideration needs to be given as to the amount of work there is in supporting individual's development and undertaking development reviews. Whilst there will be no limit centrally, it will be very difficult for a reviewer to take responsibility for a large number of reviewees over time. Organisations should give consideration as to who might be best placed to review the work of other staff and develop a number of people's skills in this area. It is worth looking at the Modernisation Agency website to find out what others have done.

7. What if the person has developed extra skills that are not required in the post?

The review at the second gateway focuses on the NHS KSF outline for the specific post in which the person is employed and the payband on which that post is placed. Additional knowledge and skills that the individual has developed should be noted in the review form and feed into the personal development planning.

8. What if the NHS KSF post outline has been modified in response to an individual's disability to be consistent with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act?

This should have been agreed in partnership within the organisation and the modified outline at the foundation and second gateway should be used for this individual.

9. What if the individual has not provided sufficient evidence of applying their knowledge and skills against the KSF post outline to pass through a gateway?

If there is a joint decision that the individual has not yet provided sufficient evidence because s/he needs to undertake further development, the reasons for deferral should be clearly identified and documented together with those aspects of the NHS KSF outline still to be achieved. A date for reviewing this position should be set. Once there is agreement that the individual can meet the NHS KSF post outline then pay progression resumes from that date.

10. What if the individual has been unable to develop and apply the knowledge and skills required in the NHS KSF post outline due to organisational issues?

If there is a joint decision that the individual has not yet provided sufficient evidence because the organisation has not been able to meet its responsibilities

for supporting development, then such development should be arranged as soon as is possible. The individual will automatically progress through the gateway. This situation, like others, should be clearly recorded.

11. Can an organisation restrict the number of individuals who can progress through a gateway at any one time?

No. Organisations are not allowed to do this and it is fundamentally against the letter and the spirit of the National Agreement. Organisations will be monitored to ensure that all staff have the opportunity to progress through gateways at the time they should.

12. What if there is a disciplinary problem?

Disciplinary problems must be dealt with separately from the NHS KSF and the development review process. The Terms and Conditions handbook states the exceptional grounds for deferral of pay progression.

13. What if an individual moves to another job in the NHS?

If individuals move to another post on the same payband then they will be expected to apply the necessary knowledge and skills for that post as described in the NHS KSF post outline. A foundation gateway will not be applicable as the person is within the same payband.

If the individual moves to another post in a different payband then a foundation gateway for that post will apply after 12 months in post.

14. What if the individual agrees to retrain in a different area of work for wider service or operational reasons?

If this has been done with the explicit agreement of the employer concerned¹, then the individual's pay should be protected until the individual has had a reasonable opportunity to complete their retraining and progress to a point where pay protection is no longer required.

15. I confess to being a bit confused. It is said that by the time you reach the top of your band you should have met fully your KSF outline. As most bands have 9 incremental points - does that mean you can take 9 years to be fully functioning in your post? Even if we take this at the second gateway (positioned at about point 5-6) that is still a long time to take to become fully competent.

The KSF and development review process recognises that people need time to develop fully to meet the demands of the post. The second gateways have been

¹ Note 'explicit employer agreement' does not cover those cases where employers have agreed to reemploy someone following redundancy.

set at points that were considered to give people a reasonable time to develop fully in the post. Some people will not need that long but others will – all will need to focus first on meeting the full demands of the post before considering their own personal career development.

Section 6

Personal Development Planning

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

1. What if an individual is not currently seeking to develop their career?

Provided that the individual is able to apply their knowledge and skills to meet the demands of the post for which they are employed – which means that they will be able to pass through the second gateway at the due time – this is fine. PDPs for these individuals are likely to focus on enabling the individual to maintain their current knowledge and skills and develop these to meet any changing requirements.

2. What if the PDP is not achieved within the agreed period of time due to unforeseeable circumstances?

PDPs should be realistic and reflect the fact that individual's development might take a number of years. The non-completion of a PDP should be seen as an exception rather than the norm. However occasionally it will be possible to carry over part of the PDP to the following year.

3. What if the individual member of staff and their reviewer are unable to agree on the content and focus of the PDP?

The PDP is part of a joint commitment to the individual's development within the organisation. Some reviewers might need support in developing their own knowledge and skills in development review and planning. Some individuals might need support to enable them to be realistic about what the organisation can offer them personally given the commitments to all other employees in the organisation. Others will need help to realise that development can be appropriate for them. If it is impossible for a reviewer and an individual member of staff to reach agreement on the content and focus of an individual's PDP then they can seek support. This might be from, for example, a trade union learning representative, or someone in the human resource department, or the reviewer's line manager, or a professional supervisor.

4. Is there an appeals process?

No but if things get really difficult the individuals can take issues through the normal grievance procedures within the organisation.

5. Can staff undertake personal development before the second gateway?

Personal Development Plans should enable individuals to either maintain their current position or develop beyond their current post. It is important to prioritise the learning needed for the full KSF outline for the post (ie the second gateway).

Section 7

Learning and Development

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Will I need to go on a lot of courses to meet my KSF Outline?

No. Having attended lots of courses does not mean that you can demonstrate how to apply the knowledge and skills needed in your post. There are lots of different ways of gaining skills and knowledge in the workplace as part of your everyday job eg through self development activity, job shadowing, watching others, learning as you practise. You and your manager will agree a development plan that covers a wide variety of approaches to learning and development.

Section 8

KSF and Wider HR Issues

KSF AND WIDER HR ISSUES

1. How should we use KSF outlines in new job adverts that are being issued now? Do we have to do interim ones or can we wait until we agree that we have finalised the KSF outlines for the posts concerned and they really are a live and a true reflection of the post concerned.

It is up to local organisations as to how they use KSF outlines in recruitment during the implementation phase of Agenda for Change. Obviously NHS organisations should be communicating information about the new pay system and the central role of the KSF within it to people applying to work in the NHS. If it is agreed in partnership during the implementation phase that draft KSF outlines would not provide helpful information on the post at that point in time, then it is probably best not to use them until they have been finalised. KSF full and foundation outlines should be available to new staff no later than October 2005.

2. How do we link our current appraisal system with the KSF development review process?

It is not possible to answer that question without knowing what your current appraisal system is like as appraisal systems differ. Organisations with appraisal systems that have development of staff as their basis should have no trouble integrating their existing system with the KSF. It is worth looking at some of the examples of KSF policies offered in the [KSF compendium of shared information](#) with in this site. Organisations that do not have an existing appraisal system should concentrate on implementing the KSF first as it will form a good solid basis for staff development.

However if your organisation does not currently have an appraisal system in place you might need to invest in developing the skills of your managers as similar skills are needed in the development review process. Organisations should make sure that they do not run two separate systems – the KSF focuses on individual development whilst appraisal systems focus on organisational development and the individual's contribution to the organisation. The two can work well together for the organisation and for individuals. So, for example, organisations can use the mandatory forms that are needed for the development review process and an additional form that brings in the organisational objectives which the individual needs to meet.

3. Do you need to write a new job description before you develop a KSF post outline?

Organisations do not need to write new job descriptions before they develop KSF post outlines. However, some organisations have found with the implementation of Agenda for Change that there are a number of areas of human resource management which need to be addressed to facilitate implementation – and revising job descriptions so they are up-to-date is one aspect of this.

4. How many days of KSF training will there be for managers?

This needs to be determined locally and will depend on the knowledge and skills that managers already have such as in relation to supporting staff development.

5. Is there any guidance in respect the effect of maternity leave, parental leave and adoption leave on meeting PDPs and progress through the KSF gateways?

Organisations will have to look at a number of their current policies to identify the impact that the KSF will have on them. Each case probably needs to be considered individually as, for example, some people will already have achieved the requirements of the second gateway, even before they are due to pass through it. It is also possible, in the case of pregnancy, for manager and employee to agree to conduct a gateway review ahead of any leave actually being taken, as this is often known and predictable. Thus the individual could proceed through the gateway whilst actually on leave, provided that the required level of competency had been established in advance. Either party might take responsibility to think ahead in this way, and the precise procedure could be agreed and written up into local policies.

6. Can we use the KSF with staff who are employed on other contracts (eg local pay, those in working in multi-agency teams)?

Yes. The KSF can be used with people working in or with your organisation who do not fall under Agenda for Change as a development review system.

7. What are the service and role redesign opportunities within and across agencies that can be supported by the KSF?

The implementation of Agenda for Change provides the opportunity for organisations – working alone or with others – to think about current roles and how these could change to improve services. As the KSF has been designed in partnership and is to be used in partnership it provides a good focus for having the discussion about what happens now and how this needs to be changed to improve services in the future. The organisations that have done this successfully have involved staff on the ground right through the process so that there has been buy-in and understanding from day one. They have worked with staff on how services need to change. Then they have looked at the implications of these service changes for how everyone's job is designed and the relationship between different jobs. The jobs and their focus are then captured in KSF outlines for those jobs. Consideration is then given to everyone's development needs given jobs have changed and any implications for systems and processes. And this is then followed through with the necessary learning and development being put in place. It is worth looking at the website for examples of how this has been done.

8. What work has been done centrally to link other competences to the KSF and how can we get hold of this information?

The KSF Development Group has an ongoing programme of work to link national / UK quality assured standards and competences to the NHS KSF 2004. This includes national occupational standards / workforce competences developed by Sector Skills Councils, such as Skills for Health, and also the competences / standards of proficiency issued by the regulatory bodies, such as the Nursing and Midwifery Council and the Health Professions Council. The linking takes some time as not only does the detail of each of the competences need to be looked at and then linked to the KSF but this then needs to be confirmed by the body which owns / developed the competences. Once the linking of the competences has been agreed the information on the links is held on the e-ksf (the computerised tool for the KSF). This allows you to look at the detail of the competences concerned as well as the detail of the KSF. In addition the planned work in this area is available on the KSF website. You can also let us know if there are other areas that you think should be linked centrally which do not appear on this list as the KSF Development Group needs to hear from the field about other areas that would be helpful to look at.

9. If we don't already use other competences do we need to do so?

No there is nothing in the Agenda for Change Agreement that says organisations have to link and use the KSF to other competences. It is up to organisations to decide whether other competences would inform their work (such as through providing more detailed information to support development). Organisations should embed the KSF first and then consider whether or not they want to become involved in using competences. The linking that has been done at national level is initially designed to support organisations who are already using other competences. It also provides a resource for all organisations should they decide to use other competences in the future.

10. How does the KSF link with Skills for Life being led by NHSU?

The KSF Development Group has planned some work with the NHSU to show the inter-relationship between the two – it is unlikely that anything will be available until spring 2005.

11. How does the Career Development Framework developed by the MA for the NHS fit with the KSF?

The Modernisation Agency's Career Development Framework is a draft framework that is out for consultation. Overall it is to be welcomed as it emphasises lifelong learning and helps people to see how their careers might develop. However it is important to note that the levels used in the Career Framework do not necessarily relate to the levels used in the KSF or within Agenda for Change.

12. How does the KSF link with the Electronic Staff Record?

The KSF development group have been working closely with the ESR team to ensure that the two systems work seamlessly together. Full implementation of the ESR is not due until 2007 so it is important that the e-KSF is available to

organisations in England and Wales (who will use the ESR) until at least that time.

13. What is the e-KSF and how can I use it?

The e-KSF is the electronic tool to enable organisations to implement and manage the Knowledge and Skills Framework. It is centrally funded, easy to use and fully available for all NHS organisations in the UK to use now. It allows you to do everything you need to do in relation to the KSF online, saving you the need for paper-based processes and helping organisations to report on their progress against the KSF milestones. The e-KSF is internet-based (at www.e-ksf.org) and is accessed via individual, secure usernames and passwords. If you want to know where your organisation is in relation to the e-KSF then talk to your organisation's KSF lead. If you want some basic information on the e-KSF, please visit www.e-ksfnow.org which provides an update on development of the system and information on how individuals and organisations can access it.