

Developing a KSF outline – the experience in the East

The Continuing Professional Development Special Interest Group of ECLaKSA, along with two members of the ECLaKSA training SIG, met at the Lister Hospital on 19th April. The session was led by Thelma Harvey.

Two members of the group were union members, which was lucky as none of us really appreciated that because KSF is a partnership initiative sample KSFs cannot be added to the national KSF library without clear joint working.

It was agreed to use the job description for the post of Assistant Librarian at Colchester General Hospital, as this post is currently vacant. Thelma felt this would help us focus on what is needed to do the job, rather than on the skills of a particular individual.

Thelma looked over the job description and very quickly assigned dimensions and levels based on what she read. She then used that information as a guide so that she could suggest which dimensions we should look at and which level we should consider first. We looked at the highest likely level in each case, and then came down a level if need be.

For each dimension we looked at the suggested level and the indicators and tried to offer examples of work that would tie in with each indicator. It became clear very quickly whether or not we had hit the right level, as we'd either be offering a whole range of possible examples, or struggling to come up with anything at all. Where we felt we had a lot of examples we also looked at the next level up to see if that would be more appropriate. Generally the boundaries between levels seemed quite clear.

One aspect that was quite difficult was taking the KSF to the level that would be needed when someone was in post, fully competent and approaching the second AfC gateway. This is because the post is fairly new and there have only been two post holders, both of whom have used it as a developmental opportunity and moved on soon after Chartering. So there were areas where I could say that although neither incumbent had done something, had they stayed longer it would have been appropriate for them to take it on. That was the main example of needing to think about the requirements of the job rather than the attributes of a particular individual.

The extra dimensions were a little more difficult. It was invaluable having Thelma's knowledge of the whole scheme as she was able to point out possible overlap between different dimensions and prevent us picking too many. There were a couple of occasions where we wanted to use one dimension, but Thelma thought the particular aspects of the job would be better covered by another dimension.

Health and well-being seems not to have any relevance to non-clinical staff, although we did discuss whether a librarian responsible for an information service to patients might consider HWB1 – promotion of health and well-being – as one of their dimensions.

Dimensions IK1, IK2 and IK3 clearly apply to library staff and to this post. G2 involved quite a lot of discussion and the trainers present felt that in some ways the post might warrant a level 4. Eventually we agreed that although some aspects might approach level 4 the bulk of the work was at level 3. We also wanted G2, development and innovation, but agreed that the innovative aspects of the post would be covered by the other aspects, particularly G1, G5 and G8.

At the end of the day Thelma compared the dimensions and levels we had chosen with those selected in the work done by NE London on a library manager post. We had selected the same dimensions and given either the same level or one lower in each case, which seemed appropriate.

Thelma spent the day with us. We had a late start and early close to accommodate colleagues having to travel long distances. We had a break for lunch and were delayed in starting due to a lack of KSF handbooks. In all the actual work took perhaps three or four hours.

Thelma Harvey's help was invaluable. We hope to be able to develop further KSFs for staff in primary care libraries, and perhaps others to use locally if not to offer to the national e-KSF library.

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