What are competencies?

Competencies are descriptions of the skills, know-how, abilities, and personal qualities needed to perform a particular role successfully. Organisations now recognise that clarifying the competencies that their staff need and supporting individual and team development of these can be a major factor in their success. Often these competencies will be documented as a set of core competencies or a competency framework. The content will include core competencies that are needed by everyone for good performance and the specific professional competencies required by people working in specific functions and roles.

Why are competencies important for good knowledge management?

Good knowledge management doesn’t just happen. To ensure that organisations can acquire, create, organise, share, use and build on the knowledge that is needed for their successful performance requires the right skills. These skills are needed by much of the workforce and organisations are now beginning to include competencies in knowledge and information management in their core competency lists. The social care workforce also needs these competencies to ensure that its activities develop, use, and share the best knowledge available.

Knowledge Management competencies for social care

The competencies given in the table overleaf are the core knowledge management competencies needed by everyone involved in social care practice. They do not include the competencies that Leaders and Managers will require to create and develop the knowledge environment in which their staff can excel. These can be explored in two of the references below.

References for further reading

The information contained in these references has been developed by leading knowledge and information strategists and practitioners.

The TFPL Knowledge & Information Management Competency Dictionary describes competencies them in terms of behaviours. It provides four levels of application (strategic leadership, team leadership, team membership and all employees) and can be downloaded from: http://www.tfpl.com/training/dev/compdictionary.cfm

The Government Knowledge and Information Management Professional Skills Framework provides government with a common language with which to describe the specialist attributes that characterise knowledge and information management professionals. It is designed to sit alongside the other elements of the PSG requirements, for use in recruiting, promoting, appraising and developing knowledge and information management professionals in government. See http://gkimn.nationalarchives.gov.uk/framework.html
In formation Literacy skills are essential for effective information management and this site aims to provide a centre of current expertise on these skills. See Information Literacy [http://www.informationliteracy.org.uk/](http://www.informationliteracy.org.uk/)

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<tr>
<th>Competency title</th>
<th>Description (what the competent worker is able to do):</th>
<th>What effective performance looks like:</th>
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| Knowledge Awareness | Demonstrates awareness of the knowledge and information relevant to their role and the value that this brings to the work they do and to their personal development. | • Assesses the knowledge and information required for specific tasks  
• Reviews new tasks for their knowledge needs  
• Understands when to seek new knowledge and check existing knowledge  
• Alerts colleagues to gaps that may impede work |
| Finding knowledge | Understands the range of sources relevant to their work and demonstrates the ability to find and select the knowledge needed for a task using appropriate tools and techniques | • Recognises the SCIE types of knowledge  
• Identifies sources relevant to work  
• Looks out for new sources and maintains a list of sources relevant to their work  
• Knows what sources are accessible in their workplace or from their desktop  
• Uses search strategies that are appropriate and effective for their needs |
| Keeping knowledge up to date | Recognises the importance of current knowledge and demonstrates that they have put in place mechanisms to ensure that they are alerted to current information | • Checks knowledge for currency before use when appropriate  
• Puts in place mechanisms for being alerted to new knowledge in their area of interest  
• Works with colleagues to keep team knowledge up to date and alerts colleagues to new knowledge and experience |
| Contributing to knowledge and information management processes | Aware of their personal responsibility to managing the knowledge and information they create. Uses the processes, standards and guidelines required to manage knowledge and information in their workplace | • Knows which are the relevant processes and standards to follow  
• Complies with these standards including records and document management standards  
• Understands the impact of Freedom of Information and Data protection regulation on their work  
• Influences colleagues to adhere to standards  
• Ensures that their own files are well organised so that they can be |
| Competencies for Knowledge Management | Recognises the risks resulting from using information inappropriately and demonstrates judgement in assessing information and selecting the best information to use. | • Appraises information critically before using it  
• Can bring together and analyse information from a variety of sources and develop the evidence which will guide their actions  
• Seeks further information for a decision if the evidence appears unsound |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Using knowledge and information for decision making | Appreciates the value of sharing knowledge and information appropriately and participates in activities that encourage and facilitate sharing | • Understands where own knowledge is relevant to others  
• Readily shares own knowledge, skills and experience to enable others to meet their goals and to increase the knowledge of the team  
• Supports others when they need knowledge and information  
• Seeks knowledge and information from colleagues  
• Develops approaches with colleagues to build knowledge sharing into every day work  
• Contributes to team information and knowledge resources and sharing activity |
| Sharing and contributing to knowledge and information of colleagues | Recognises that reflecting on experiences as they work can help develop new insights which can improve their own performance and help others to benefit from their experience. | • Understands how to use the techniques for learning before, during and after  
• Reflects on what they are learning as work progresses on their own or with the team  
• Shares their personal learning with others in the team and more widely, if appropriate  
• Checks the experience of others before starting a new task |
| Learning from experience | Grows their own knowledge through networking and learning from others within and outside their organisation | • Seeks opportunities to network and learn from others across organisational boundaries  
• Encourages others to do so and shares useful contacts  
• Where practical joins communities of practice and networks to improve job knowledge and performance |
| Networking and collaboration | Aims to communicate succinctly and effectively | • Recognises the importance of good communication to sharing and transferring knowledge  
• Understands the risks from failing |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies for Knowledge Management</th>
<th>to communicate well</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Tailors written and oral communications for the audience</td>
<td>• Uses the best approaches for the job</td>
<td>• Checks that their communications and the knowledge they’ve aimed to give us understood.</td>
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</tbody>
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| Development of Knowledge Management competence | Demonstrates responsibility for their continuing development of skills for knowledge and information management in the context of their work | • Looks for ideas to improve their own knowledge and information capability from their team and wider colleagues | • Suggests useful improvements to the way that their colleagues develop, share and use knowledge | • Ready to adopt new ideas to improve own knowledge capability |