Rhondda Cynon Taf

Frontline and Customer Care Competency Framework
(For Customer Service and Customer-facing staff)

(January 2009)

Content

Competencies – Explanatory Notes

What are 'Competencies?'

The competencies in this document describe how really 'excellent' staff would work in Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council (RCTCBC). They don't describe specific tasks that people do as part of their job, (job descriptions do this). Instead they describe *how* someone who is really effective would do those things, and *what else* they would do in addition to those things. Working in a way that is described by the competencies doesn't necessarily mean doing 'more' in terms of work, but it can mean working differently.

All positions within RCTCBC are included in this framework. There are 9 main job families:

- Strategic Management (Heads of Service and above)
- Middle Management
- Supervisors / Team Leaders (1st line managers)
- Administrators
- Ancillary workers
- Care and Community
- Frontline and Customer Care staff
- Skilled Manual Workers
- Technical, Specialist and Professional staff

The decision tree on page 5 will help you to identify which job family your job is most likely to be in. If you have any questions regarding which competency framework is most suitable for your role, please discuss this with Human Resources (HR) or your line manager.

By using competencies to define what 'excellent' performance looks like for everyone, and encouraging people to work in these ways, RCTCBC is more able to deliver levels of service that will really make a difference to our Community.

Understanding Your Competencies

The overview shows a summary of all the competency framework headings on 1 page. There are a number of competency areas that have been identified as being key for all workers in RCTCBC and although the actual demonstration of these may vary for different jobs, these competencies are important for everyone. The key competencies are:

- **Working with other people** (this also includes in a team or in a partnership)

- **Communicating Effectively**

- **Focusing on Service Users** (this also includes looking after their interests, earning their trust, working with service users and meeting service user needs)

Each of the competencies is broken down into a list of specific behaviours which has three columns. On the left column of each list are the things that other people would be able to see you doing if you were 'excellent' at your job. On the right, are the negative versions of those behaviours which give examples of ineffective behaviour. Between the two extremes, an adequate, basic, level of performance is described.

The three descriptions for each type of behaviour **illustrate points 1, 2, 2.5, 3, 4 and 5 sliding scale**. You might feel that you don't sit in any particular 'box', all the time. However, because there is a **range of behaviour** between the positive and negative behaviours, it is possible for someone to sit between the points. Or, you may show both positive and negative sides of the same behaviour at different times, for example depending on who you are working with.

This is shown in the example below:
Here is an extract from the *Communicating Effectively* competency, with the in-between behaviours added in grey to show the full scale:

An excellent RCTCBC Worker: An ineffective RCTCBC Worker:

4	3	2.5	2	1
Communicates clearly and concisely	*Generally communicates well (good standard rather than excellent)*	Uses communication that requires some checking by others	*Communication can be vague or unclear- would benefit from some development*	Is unfocused and unclear and leaves others unsure of what was said or meant

If you need help understanding what the scales and behaviours mean in relation to your job, please discuss them with your line manager.

The health and safety of our staff and service users and valuing diversity are core to all our values in RCTCBC and are either expressed as specific competencies or are integrated into individual frameworks.

How the Competencies Will Be Used

This set of competencies will be used within RCT's Performance Plus! system to help everyone in the Council to see where they are in relation to 'excellent' performance.

This set will also be used to measure candidates' suitability when they are applying for jobs like yours at RCT, to make sure the best people are selected. They can also be used to define training and development content.

Although these sets of competencies describe qualities of 'excellent' workers, it is accepted that it would not be realistic to expect anyone to show all the positive behaviours, across all of the competencies, all of the time. However, there is an

expectation that people strive towards this ideal. The competencies should therefore be seen as something to aim towards, and to help you to clearly understand where your strengths lie and where you may need further development.

RCTCBC Frontline Competency Framework

RCTCBC Frontline Staff - Competency Framework (Overview)

People

Working with Others (1)

Has good relationships with members of their own and other teams based on trust and respect; works productively with other service areas to deliver the best results for Service Users.

- Responsible, trustworthy, reliable
- Courteous, polite
- Supportive, uses others' strengths
- Fair, treats others with respect

Communicating Effectively (2)

Communicates clearly with a range of individuals, whether face-to-face, over the telephone or in writing.

- Informs, explains, openly shares
- Listens, receptive
- Clear, effective, accurate

Tasks

Meeting Customers' Needs (3)

Works towards resolving customer issues quickly and effectively; sets clear expectations to customers; gives correct information

- Proactive, takes responsibility
- Understands, empathises
- Efficient, effective

Demonstrating Technical Ability (4)

Understands the skills that are important for performing the role proficiently; understands own skill level and where further development is needed

- Accurate, proficient
- Open to development

Achieving Results (5)

Manages time effectively; meets deadlines; is planned and organised

- Planned, organised, prioritises
- Thinks ahead, flexible
- Adds value, effective, strong work-ethic
- Takes responsibility, balance with well-being

Culture and Values – The RCTCBC Context

Maintaining Safety and Well-being (6)

Has accurate knowledge of and complies with health and safety procedures; takes responsibility for own health, safety and well-being; monitors own stress levels; supports others to do the same.

- Responsibility, awareness
- Compliance

Demonstrating Professionalism (7)

Demonstrates a professional and positive attitude; is open and enthusiastic about change; takes pride in representing the Council

- Professional, positive
- Resilient, calm
- Flexible
- Pride

Working with Others

Has good relationships with members of their own and other teams based on trust and respect; works productively with other service areas to deliver the best results for Service Users.

An excellent RCTCBC Frontline Staff Member: An ineffective RCTCBC Frontline Staff Member:

Supports other team members when required, particularly new team members	Is supportive at times but tends to concentrate on completing own tasks	Is unsupportive and won't help others; makes people feel 'in the way' or a 'nuisance'
Makes use of other team members' strengths to resolve issues	Is aware of others' strengths but doesn't make the most of them	Tries to do everything themselves to the detriment of the team
Is open about finding situations difficult and allows others to help	Will only open up about difficulties when asked or waits for help to be offered	Keeps problems to self, won't accept support
Knows the role of other teams and individuals and uses this to help resolve Service Users' issues	Does not know enough about what other teams and individuals do and how to use this information	Doesn't know or show interest in what other teams and individuals do and how this can help
Seeks to prevent or overcome conflict	Can allow conflict to continue more than it should	Is responsible for creating conflict
Accepts constructive feedback from co-workers	Usually accepts constructive feedback appropriately	Avoids or rejects feedback or becomes confrontational or defensive
Is tactful, polite and respectful	Usually polite but can be inappropriately informal at times	Is dismissive of colleagues or sounds bored to others
Is proactive and persistent about chasing requests when necessary	Waits too long before chasing requests or waits to be told before chasing	Doesn't chase requests once passed on

Communicating Effectively

Communicates clearly with a range of individuals, whether face-to-face, over the telephone or in writing.

An excellent RCTCBC Frontline Staff Member: An ineffective RCTCBC Frontline Staff Member:

An excellent RCTCBC Frontline Staff Member		An ineffective RCTCBC Frontline Staff Member
Listens to others and actively checks their understanding	Sometimes listens and/or checks understanding, and sometimes makes assumptions	Doesn't listen to others or check their own understanding
Uses style of language that others can clearly understand	Adapts their style and language to suit some but not all groups	Expects everyone to understand their own preferred style and language
Passes on accurate information to other service areas	Usually passes on accurate information to other service areas	Passes on inaccurate or incomplete information to other service areas
Thinks about and consistently uses the most appropriate form of communication	Uses the quickest, or their own preferred method of communication rather than the best one	Does not use the most appropriate forms of communication or overly relies on one format e.g. email
Sets out written communication clearly, accurately and in a well-structured way	Produces written documents that are sometimes inaccurate or unclear	Sets out information untidily or inaccurately so it can't be understood
Shares information with others; gives others the full picture	Does not always give others the full picture; may withhold information unintentionally	Keeps information to themselves; uses information as power
Always uses correct grammar and spelling	Sometimes makes mistakes with grammar and spelling through lack of proofing	Makes frequent grammatical and spelling errors

Meeting Customers' Needs

Works towards resolving customer issues quickly and effectively; sets clear expectations to customers; gives correct information.

An excellent RCTCBC Frontline Staff Member: An ineffective RCTCBC Frontline Staff Member:

Focuses on resolving customer queries quickly	Resolves most customer queries within a reasonable timeframe	Doesn't respond to customer queries within a suitable timeframe
Always puts the Service Users' needs first	Usually puts Service Users' needs first	Ignores Service Users' needs in favour of own priorities
Takes responsibility for resolving customer queries	Takes responsibility when queries can be easily resolved, and passes others on	Sees responsibility as only belonging to their line manager or to other people
Knows what issues they can resolve themselves and when to refer upwards	Is overly cautious and refers too much to their line manager	Always refers issues to their line manager even when they know the answer
Anticipates what else a customer might need, and provides them without being asked	Competently provides customers with what they have requested	Provides incorrect information or provides the bare minimum required
Sets clear expectations to customers about what can be provided	Usually sets clear expectations but can be vague at times	Sets expectations that won't be met
Goes and finds the correct information if they can't provide it personally	Finds correct information for customers if it's easy to do so	Makes no effort to find information if they can't provide it themselves
Considers the needs of different groups e.g. children, senior citizens, disabled people	Treats everyone the same, regardless of their needs	Is impatient or inconsiderate of the needs of different groups

Demonstrating Technical Ability

Understands the skills that are important for performing the role proficiently; understands own skill level and where further development is needed.

An excellent RCTCBC Frontline Staff Member: An ineffective RCTCBC Frontline Staff Member:

Takes responsibility for keeping job-relevant knowledge up-to-date	Updates knowledge when prompted by others	Doesn't keep knowledge up-to-date, assumes that they know it all
Takes responsibility for identifying their own development needs and is open to learning	Accepts development when prompted by others	Is closed or hostile to learning and development
Has a high level of accuracy and pays attention to details	Generally accurate with some attention to detail needed	Does not always maintain a high level of accuracy - makes too many mistakes
Ensures they have collected all the necessary information to move things forward	Collects insufficient information and has to go back to the customer	Collects insufficient information and makes assumptions rather than getting further clarification
Understands data protection and doesn't disclose private information inappropriately	Occasionally discloses private information inappropriately e.g. by gossiping or leaving information lying around	Regularly breaches data protection or loses personal data
Demonstrates excellent levels of computer skills	Demonstrates adequate levels of computer skills but may need some development	Has inadequate or poor levels of computer skills
Demonstrates excellent levels of numeracy	Has generally adequate levels numeracy but makes some errors	Demonstrates poor levels of numeracy that are below the requirement for the role

Achieving Results
Manages time effectively; meets deadlines; is planned and organised.

An excellent RCTCBC Frontline Staff Member: An ineffective RCTCBC Frontline Staff Member:

Is always punctual and ready to start work on time	Is usually punctual and ready to start work on time	Has generally poor time keeping and doesn't come in prepared to start work
Takes initiative and can work without close supervision	Only works without supervision on very simple, routine or well-known tasks	Needs to be told what to do all the time
Deals with issues quickly	Delays resolving issues until the last minute	Delays resolving issues until too late
Thinks ahead when planning work	Only looks at immediate issues when planning work	Doesn't take a planned approach to work
Is flexible about re-arranging priorities to account for changes and new information	Does not always re-arrange priorities to account for changes and new information	Is inflexible about altering priorities
Prioritises tasks according to importance for the Council	Prioritises tasks according to their own views of importance	Does not prioritise tasks
Always completes tasks on time	Usually gets work done on time	Rarely finishes tasks on time

Maintaining Safety and Well-being

Has accurate knowledge of and complies with health and safety (H&S) procedures; takes responsibility for own health, safety and well-being; monitors own stress levels; supports others to do the same.

An excellent RCTCBC Frontline Staff Member: An ineffective RCTCBC Frontline Staff Member:

Takes responsibility for complying with all relevant H&S procedures and legislation	Is aware of what seem to be the most important H&S guidelines	Has little or no working knowledge of relevant H&S policies
Is aware of current and potential risks and hazards within their team's work area	Makes sure their own work area is tidy and not a danger to others	Has careless work practices
Carries out daily inspection of equipment (where relevant). Ensures that maintenance and/or disposal of equipment and resources is in line with Environmental best practice	Occasionally carries out inspection of equipment. Has limited understanding of how equipment and resources should be disposed of in line with environmental best practice	Never carries out inspection of equipment
Anticipates and reports any risks and faults to the correct people quickly	Reports risks and faults as they occur to the correct people	Never reports faults or risks
Monitors and manages own stress levels and asks for support when necessary; is aware of own impact in causing others stress	Appears to monitor and / or manage stress levels	Allows stress levels to get out of control and impact on others; doesn't ask for support

Demonstrating Professionalism

Demonstrates a professional and positive attitude; is open and enthusiastic about change; takes pride in representing the Council.

An excellent RCTCBC Frontline Staff Member: An ineffective RCTCBC Frontline Staff Member:

Is responsible, trustworthy and reliable and takes personal accountability for work	Is generally trustworthy and reliable but does not always take personal responsibility	Is unreliable and avoids taking appropriate responsibility
Stays calm and tries to diffuse tense/aggressive situations	Handle's some tense situations effectively	Inflames situations or loses temper
Demonstrates a positive and confident attitude	Generally positive and confident in most situations	Is generally negative and can lack confidence
Is resilient and works effectively under pressure	Generally capable but can react adversely to pressure	Panics under pressure, over-reacts to situations, takes them personally
Always demonstrates that they take pride in representing the Council	Represents the Council well to Service Users but can on occasion be critical to other staff	'Bad-mouths' the Council to other staff and to Service Users
Is prepared to try new things	Will try new things with reservations	Prefers what they already know and is resistant to change
Is willing to work in different locations and in different sections if required	Prefers to work in their own location and area but is prepared to work in different locations when necessary	Is only comfortable working in own location and area
Understands the Council's approach to the environment and demonstrates consideration of social and environmental concerns in their day to day role	Demonstrates some understanding of social and environmental factors relevant to their role	Disregards social and environmental concerns in the execution of their role