



Rhondda Cynon Taf

Strategic Management Competency Framework

(Heads of Service to Chief Executive)



(January 2009)



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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	<i>Generally communicates well (good standard rather than excellent)</i>	Uses communication that requires some checking by others	<i>Communication can be vague or unclear- would benefit from some development</i>	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 Strategic Manager Competency Framework



RCTCBC Strategic Managers - Competency Framework (Overview)

People

Developing and Motivating People (1)

Promotes staff development; values, motivates and empowers team members; maximises the team's performance by recognising and using skills and strengths; promotes a culture of open, honest, and constructive two-way feedback

- Inspires, passionate, positive
- Celebrates, supports, develops, empowers, challenges
- Consistent, fair, values people
- Culture of learning

Working in Partnerships and Teams (2)

Works effectively with people both inside and outside the organisation; proactively builds strong relationships in order to achieve goals.

- Respect, trust, constructive relationships
- Involves and encourages, inclusive
- Interested, shares, team-focused, influences
- Across areas and beyond the Council, democratic accountability

Communicating Effectively (3)

Communicates key issues clearly and effectively; promotes a culture of open, honest and transparent communication; adapts their communication style and approach as necessary

- Courteous, polite, listens, receptive
- Informs, explains, openly shares, creates opportunities
- Clear, effective, timely
- Assertive, willing to challenge

Leading Change (4)

Creates a culture of innovation and improvement; supports others to adapt to change and takes responsibility for responding to challenges creatively

- Instigates, drives, embraces
- Innovative, creative, receptive
- Encourages, supports and understands
- Modernising agenda, responsibility

Tasks

Working Strategically (5)

Provides strategic direction for the Council and service area to improve service provision; considers future challenges when planning; uses a broad range of accurate information as a basis for setting strategy

- Drives strategic priorities
- Wider strategic imperatives – breadth of vision
- Emerging issues, implications
- Wider corporate issues

Managing Resources (6)

Manages resources efficiently and effectively in order to provide best possible value and service delivery

- Creative, radical, different
- Delegates responsibility, robust plans
- Positive, anticipates
- Partnerships, joint commissioning

Achieving Results (7)

Achieves results by setting informed, stretching but achievable targets; plans and prioritises in order to meet deadlines and works to overcome problems

- Logical, organised, informed, prioritises
- Continuous improvements, focus, reviews
- Adds value, effective, strong work-ethic
- Takes responsibility, balance with well-being

Culture and Values – The RCTCBC Context

Focusing on Service Users (8)

Genuinely puts Service Users at the centre by being consultative, visible and trusted; aims to provide services that are accessible and make a difference for citizens

- Genuine, consults, understands
- Visible, available, profile
- Diplomatic, proactive, improves
- Fair and accessible

Political Knowledge and Awareness (9)

Manages the political interface sensitively and effectively; has a good knowledge and understanding of political systems within and outside the Council

- Clear, justified recommendations
- Fully informs, involves, positive
- Sensitive, aware, objective
- Knowledge and understanding
- Develops awareness, builds relationships



Developing and Motivating People

Promotes staff development; values, motivates and empowers team members; maximises the team's performance by recognising and using skills and strengths; promotes a culture of open, honest and constructive two-way feedback.

An excellent RCTCBC Strategic Manager:

An ineffective RCTCBC Strategic Manager:

Inspires others by being passionate and enthusiastic and having a positive 'action-focused' attitude	Is mainly positive and enthusiastic	Always sees the problem or the negative, moans or looks troubled, does not inspire people
Identifies and makes the best use of the skills (including literacy and numeracy skills), knowledge and strengths of the team (Performance Plus! / supervision / etc)	Is aware of, the knowledge and strengths in the team	Does not acknowledge the skills, knowledge and strengths in the team
Shares and celebrates all successes and openly recognises other people's contributions. Values people	Usually celebrates successes	Ignores successes and others' contributions; takes the credit for other people's work, does not show they value people
Develops people for both the immediate and the longer term, and promotes a culture of continuous learning (Workforce Planning)	Develops a team for current needs	Ignores the development needs of team members, or only considers it at appraisal time
Empowers people by giving space, freedom, flexibility and trust, where appropriate	Delegates single tasks or responsibilities within fairly rigid boundaries	Does not 'let go' of control, believes only they have the right answers
Is able to deliver difficult messages sensitively	Shows some awareness of the emotional impact of communication	Is insensitive when delivering difficult messages or overlooks the emotional impact of conversations



Gives constructive, timely feedback (Performance Plus! / supervision / etc)	Tackles issues when they become serious problems	Avoids giving honest feedback, undermines other people's efforts, makes them feel incompetent
Promotes proactive health messages and supports rehabilitation	Promotes proactive health messages and supports rehabilitation inconsistently	Does not promote proactive health messages or support rehabilitation
Genuinely aims for their own 'personal best' performance by asking for and acting on feedback from others	Occasionally asks for or acts on feedback	Doesn't ask for feedback and/or receives feedback defensively
Ensures that team members are made actively aware of the social and environmental impact of their role	Provides some information to team members on the social and environmental impact of their role	Does not provide team members with any information on the social and environmental impact of their role



Working in Partnerships and Teams

Works effectively with people both inside and outside the organisation; proactively builds strong relationships in order to achieve goals.

An excellent RCTCBC Strategic Manager:

An ineffective RCTCBC Strategic Manager:

Builds lasting, positive & constructive relationships with a wide variety of people	Has some positive relationships, but others that are more reactive or less functional	Forms unconstructive relationships with people or prefers working in isolation. Takes a reactive approach to relationship building
Constantly looks for opportunities to improve service provision through working with other service areas and beyond the Council	Works with other service areas and external partners in a sporadic manner	Is overly protective of own area to the detriment of the Council and Service Users
Creates an environment where a free and open exchange of ideas and appropriate challenge is accepted and valued	Contributes to an environment where there is some open exchange of views or challenge of others	Creates a culture of little challenge or little open sharing of ideas
Has a strong positive influence on joint decisions	Has more impact in some situations than others	Struggles to successfully influence joint decisions
Always strives to understand and work through differences in agendas, needs and points of view	Has some understanding of differences but can at times put their own agenda first	Neither understands or attempts to overcome differences in agendas, needs and points of view
Promotes and demonstrates an ethos of equality and diversity	Complies with, but doesn't always fully embrace, equality and diversity issues	Tolerates or demonstrates unethical and unequal behaviours
Seeks to prevent or overcome conflict	Avoids or doesn't seek to overcome conflict	Exacerbates or produces conflict
Advocates their own position but compromises when appropriate to move forward	Wavers between being stubborn and working more constructively	Sticks strongly to 'fighting their own corner' or always backs down
Maintains the democratic accountability of the Council when making decisions with external partners	Generally makes decisions with external partners considering the democratic accountability of the Council	Makes decisions with external partners that run counter to the democratic aims of the Council



Communicating Effectively

Communicates key issues clearly and effectively; promotes a culture of open, honest and transparent communication; adapts their communication style and approach as necessary.

An excellent RCTCBC Strategic Manager:

An ineffective RCTCBC Strategic Manager:

Demonstrates open, honest and regular communication with all those who might need it	Communicates information when asked or when essential	Retains information for 'power' or uses propaganda to achieve 'false' impressions
Tailors their style and language to different groups of people e.g. customers, Councillors, staff	Tailors their style and language to suit most groups	Expects everyone to understand their own preferred style and language
Communicates clearly and concisely	Communicates reasonably clearly and succinctly	Is unfocused and unclear and leaves others unsure of what was said or meant
Thinks about and consistently uses the most appropriate form of communication e.g. Posters, questionnaires, forums	Uses the quickest, or their own preferred (tried and tested) method of communication	Uses inappropriate or limited forms of communication; or overly relies on one format e.g. email
Listens to others and actively checks their understanding	Usually listens and/or checks understanding	Doesn't listen to others or check their own understanding
Actively creates regular opportunities for open discussion	Takes part in open discussions, when necessary	Has to be prompted to share information and participate in open forums
Communicates early to flag up potential 'surprises' in advance	Shares relevant information as events unfold	Withholds relevant communication or communicates too late



Leading Change

Creates a culture of innovation and improvement; supports others to adapt to change and takes responsibility for responding to challenges creatively.

An excellent RCTCBC Strategic Manager:

An ineffective RCTCBC Strategic Manager:

Understands and embraces the need for change and responds positively to a modernising agenda	Embrace change, when there is a clear need to do so	Doesn't see the need to adapt, change or move forward
Instigates and drives change	Implements rather than initiates change	Resists change
Develops a creative approach to service delivery	Builds on existing methods rather than showing innovation	Is protective or overly attached to old ideas which are no longer useful
Encourages and supports others, including staff & middle managers, to be innovative	Generally uses ideas from staff and middle managers, or encourages and supports others to be innovative	Is a barrier to innovative ideas. Only uses own ideas. Does not encourage or support innovation
Understands others' barriers to change and supports people through change	Seeks to understand peoples' barriers to change	Imposes change on others without accounting for likely reactions
Supports innovation with appropriate structures and frameworks	Endeavours to balance innovation with appropriate structures and frameworks	Does not implement structure to support innovative ideas
Accepts responsibility and takes on the role of 'team captain'	Manages through consensus and joint decision-making	Lets others take responsibility and avoids personal accountability



Working Strategically

Provides strategic direction for the Council and service area to improve service provision; considers future challenges when planning; uses a broad range of accurate information as a basis for setting strategy.

An excellent RCTCBC Strategic Manager:

An ineffective RCTCBC Strategic Manager:

Drives strategic priorities based on real need, grounded on well-informed evaluation of data	Takes a limited range of information into account when considering strategy	Does not understand or use information in the most appropriate way to inform strategy
Sets a strategy that combines departmental strategy, the corporate vision and wider strategic imperatives (e.g. WAG)	Sets strategy led by service imperatives	Makes arbitrary strategic decisions
Is aware of, and acts on, emerging issues, trends and implications for their service and the Council	Shows awareness of emerging issues and trends and their implications	Is led by what seems most important for their own department
Contributes positively to the development of policy	Has some influence in the development of policy	Does not contribute to policy or contributes negatively to development of policy
Has clear knowledge of the connections between services and wider corporate issues	Sees the connection between their area and some other service areas, or some corporate issues	Only sees issues from the point of view of their own department/section
Appreciates why decisions have been made and sees them in the wider context	Questions decisions and usually appreciate wider considerations	Accepts decisions unequivocally
Ensures that staff understand their role in delivering the strategy	Ensures that immediate staff understand, but this might not be consistent throughout their whole area	Does not ensure their staff understand how what they do contributes



Challenges service delivery to ensure a more sustainable future to improve peoples quality of life and the quality of the environment	Occasionally challenges service delivery and pays some regard to a more sustainable future to improve peoples quality of life and the quality of the environment	Does not challenge service delivery
Ensures that social and environmental concerns are included in the overall business strategy	Demonstrates some regard for social and environmental concerns when preparing overall business strategy	Does not ensure that social and environmental concerns are included in the overall business strategy
Understands the broader context in which the Council operates in particular the social and environmental impacts that Council has on society	Demonstrates a some understanding of the broader context in which the Council operates	Does not demonstrate an understanding of the broader context in which the Council operates



Managing Resources

Manages resources efficiently and effectively in order to provide best possible value and service delivery.

An excellent RCTCBC Strategic Manager:

An ineffective RCTCBC Strategic Manager:

Develops creative and radically different approaches to maintain high quality delivery with fewer resources (Workforce Planning)	Works hard to maximise available resources	Sees limitations in ability to deliver due to perceived lack of resources
Finds efficiency savings without compromising service delivery (Workforce Planning)	Has found some efficiency savings, with a limited impact on service delivery	Makes no attempt to make savings or cuts corners and makes savings that damage service delivery
Is positive about what can be achieved with existing resources (Workforce Planning)	Usually attempts to resolve resource issues in a positive way	Moans about lack of resources and uses this as an excuse not to try
Anticipates future budget trends early and seeks to make necessary adjustments (Workforce Planning)	Considers short to medium term budget trends	Does not anticipate future budget trends until it is too late
Delegates budgetary responsibility to business units and provides appropriate support	Provides some support for some budget delegation	Maintains close control of budgets
Produces robust business plans using sound commercial criteria	Produces basic business plans with some supporting commercial criteria	Produces poor business plans not based on commercial criteria
Constantly looks for ways to attract money through partnerships and joint commissioning	Works well within existing joint commissioning frameworks	Sees Council budgets as only source of funding



Successfully manages budgets, understands, uses and analyses numerically presented information	Manages budgets reasonably well and knows who to turn to for help with data	Avoids working through budgets or data unless pressed to, or does it with errors or omissions
Ensures that resources are managed with consideration to the environment and strives to reduce wastage	Shows some consideration to reducing wastage and damage to the environment	Does not manage resources with sufficient consideration to the environment or wastage



Achieving Results

Achieves results by setting informed, stretching but achievable targets; plans and prioritises in order to meet deadlines and works to overcome problems.

An excellent RCTCBC Strategic Manager:

An ineffective RCTCBC Strategic Manager:

Understands the implications of performance metrics in a broader context	Understands some of the implications or context of performance metrics	Does not understand what performance metrics mean and their broader implications
Has a logical, organised and informed approach to planning	Shows reasonable levels of planning	Takes an ad hoc or reactive approach to planning
Prioritises to get the best out of the available time	Prioritises reasonably well	Is overwhelmed by demands or does just enough to achieve deadlines
Is able to make tough decisions	Can sometimes avoid difficult decisions	Is indecisive or avoids difficult decisions
Stays tightly focused on timescales and meets deadlines	Is usually focused on timescales and normally meets deadlines	Often misses deadlines or allows things to drift
Focuses on stretching targets that can be achieved	Focuses most on what is readily achievable	Loses interest and focus in achieving outcomes
Understands how all parties are contributing to outcomes	Has some awareness of how others are contributing	Assumes other people are contributing but does not actively check or manage delivery
Reviews outcomes in order to make improvements and learn from mistakes	Reviews outcomes but does not always fully implement improvements	Reports the same mistakes. Does not act on lessons learnt
Balances achieving results with care for their own health and well-being	Becomes stressed occasionally in the pursuit of achieving results but is usually able to manage	Allows themselves to become stressed and overworked in order to achieve results
Consistently shows consideration for and commitment to other people's health, safety and well-being including mental health	Shows some / variable thought and commitment to other people's health, safety & well-being including mental health	Avoids responsibility for or has an adverse impact on other people's health, safety and well-being including mental health



Focusing on Service Users

Genuinely puts service users at the centre by being consultative, visible and trusted; aims to provide services that are accessible and make a difference for citizens.

An excellent RCTCBC Strategic Manager:

An ineffective RCTCBC Strategic Manager:

Consults with Service Users to determine what they want from the Council and to understand what really matters	Consults and usually uses this information to guide practice	Does not consider Service Users to be relevant or makes assumptions about Service Users' needs
Is a visible presence and make themselves available to Service Users	Could be more approachable and available to Service Users	Does not actively seek interactions with Service Users
Has well developed policies and processes for engaging Service Users	Engages with Service Users in an adhoc way	Doesn't engage Service Users in a systematic way
Ensures services are accessible and are provided equitably	Could do more to provide truly accessible and equitable services	Does not consider whether services are fair or accessible
Genuinely and consistently aims to make a difference to the individual citizen	Only sees good service delivery in terms of meeting basic outcomes	Makes no link between everyday work and the impact on Service Users
Raises the profile and image of the Council and service by publicising successes to the wider community	Underestimates the value of publicising successes	Has a negative impact on the profile and image of the Council and service
Actively seeks and utilises information from front-line staff to improve services	Does not fully utilise information from people 'on the ground'	Ignores information from people 'on the ground'
Uses a wide range of innovative consultation tools in order to maximise engagement	Would benefit from using a wider range of consultation tools	Engagement with Service Users is blocked by the consultation tools used



Political Knowledge & Awareness

Manages the political interface sensitively and effectively; has a good knowledge and understanding of political systems within and outside the Council.

An excellent RCTCBC Strategic Manager:

An ineffective RCTCBC Strategic Manager:

Understands how political decisions are made	Has a basic understanding of how political decisions are made	Lacks interest in political processes or does not fully understand how political decisions are made
Is aware of political sensitivities but maintains non-political objectivity	Has a limited awareness of political sensitivities, occasionally considering the wider impact of decisions and actions	Is politically insensitive, decisions and actions have a potentially damaging impact
Helps politicians to see the wider strategic picture when making decisions	Helps politicians to see just the immediate connections and consequences of their decisions	Allows politicians to make decisions based only on ward issues
Take opportunities to build stronger relationships with politicians and share information	Focuses on just the task in hand when dealing with politicians	Allows interactions with politicians to become sidetracked by other issues and does not try to make good use of the time with them
Involves politicians at an early stage to gain support	Could involve politicians earlier or more consistently	Involves politicians at the last possible moment
Makes clear, well - justified recommendations	Leaves elected Members to make decisions by supplying information only	Provides inadequate or impenetrable information to elected Members
Makes other people aware of political sensitivities and develops others' political understanding	Provides advice for specific interventions, but doesn't raise awareness of wider issues	Ignores the potential for naïve mistakes
Works to maintain positive relationships with politicians	Maintains functional relationships with politicians	Upsets or antagonises politicians
Has a local and national political knowledge and awareness	Has a moderate understanding of local and national political issues	Actively disengages from political issues