

Agenda for change

Knowledge and Skills Framework and Gateways

This briefing gives members information on the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF), Gateways and how NHS staff would progress through pay bands.

What is the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF)?

To support personal development and career progression within the NHS, there would be a new Knowledge and Skills Framework. This would help staff to develop their skills to the full within a particular NHS post and improve links between education, development and career progression to give all NHS staff equal opportunities to develop their career.

How would it work?

The KSF would produce a list of descriptions/standards for each job, specifying the basic knowledge and skills required and how this should develop over a period of time. It would provide prompts for action by individuals and their managers to update or develop their knowledge and skills.

Further details on the KSF can be found on the DoH website at:
www.doh.gov.uk/thenhsksf

How would the KSF fit with Personal Development Plans?

Personal Development Plans would be jointly designed to identify support needed to develop the knowledge and skills appropriate to the level of responsibility for each post.

How would the KSF fit with lifelong learning?

The KSF would help to develop a culture of lifelong learning within the NHS by:

- Giving staff clear and consistent development objectives
- Helping staff to apply the knowledge and skills appropriate to their level of responsibility
- Enabling staff to identify and develop knowledge and skills that would support their career progression

Only once the Knowledge and Skills Framework was fully established, and each staff member had a Personal Development Plan in place would the Gateways become operational.

What are Gateways?

Gateways are the two points on each pay band where assessment of the individual would be made against elements of the KSF. They are referred to as Foundation and Second Gateways.

Foundation Gateway – when someone is newly appointed to a post they will have a discussion with their manager to agree the basic knowledge and skills required in the job and how they will be supported to get them. In the first 12 months in post there will be further discussions to make sure the individual is getting the basic knowledge and skills needed. She/he will then move up the pay band by annual incremental steps. (This foundation gateway would not apply to anyone already in post when the new system came in)

Second Gateway – this would occur after 3–5 pay increments (depending on band – see below) and assessment would be against the full list of KSF elements

Second Gateways would occur at the following points in the proposed pay bands:

Band	Position of Second Gateway
1	Before final point
2–4	Before first of last two points
5–7	Before first of last three points
8 (A–D)	Before final point

How would UNISON ensure these were applied fairly?

UNISON and the joint staff side has insisted, and the Management Side has agreed that safeguards be applied to the application of these Gateways:

- There would be a normal expectation of progression
- No local or national quotas would apply and all staff must have an equal opportunity to demonstrate the required standard of knowledge and skills to progress through the Gateways
- Employers must ensure that there is a robust process for checking managers' decisions and reviewing disagreements with an agreed timescale for reassessment
- Knowledge and skill requirement of

each job would be clearly stated in recruitment literature and in Personal Development Plans

- This Knowledge and skill requirement would only be changed by local agreement
- Operation of Gateways would be monitored and evaluated by both employers and staff side representatives against jointly agreed criteria to prevent discrimination or bias in relation to race or ethnicity; gender; sexual orientation; disability; religion; age; union membership or pattern of employment
- Pay progression could only be deferred where prior (recorded) discussion had taken place with the staff member, detailing the required development and giving opportunities for its achievement
- The NHS Staff Council would have long term responsibility for maintaining the KSF

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