

Sexual Health Competencies

For clinical support staff

(Health Care Assistants and Client Support Workers)

Introduction

This competency framework has been developed and agreed by a multi-agency group, who are part of the Lambeth and Southwark Sexual Health Modernisation Initiative (SHMI). The SHMI, funded by Guys and St Thomas' Charity, set out to transform and improve services in three priority areas - sexual health, kidney disease and stroke.

Variation in service provision within and between services was identified by service users as one of the reasons they were confused about 'what they could get from where'. To improve the experience of service users and their sexual health it is essential that local services deliver consistent, high quality information, advice and care.

This framework has been developed to assist this improvement process and achieve the SHMI vision of 'enabling people to manage their own sexual health effectively by easy access to information, resources and excellent services'.

Special thanks are due to the multi agency steering group which produced this document.

January 2008

Background Statement

This document is a learning and development resource to be used with an individual learning plan or personal development plan.

It has been designed to establish skills and build competencies essential for the delivery of sexual health services by a range of clinical and non-clinical staff in various settings.

This framework is not intended to replace more detailed internal competency documents or workbodies. However, there should not be any conflict or variation between the two.

This competency framework has been developed with reference to competencies from:

- Royal College of Nursing (RCN)
- British Association for Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH)
- Faculty of Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare
- Sandyford Initiative

Purpose Of Framework

- Improve communication, knowledge and skills
- Share best practice
- Increase awareness of the contribution made by each team member
- Provide guidance as to the agreed level of practice for qualified and non-qualified staff
- Facilitate an effective model to enable staff to deliver high quality care

Professional Responsibilities

The mentor must have post-registration mentor training ENB998, 997 or equivalent and be experienced as a mentor in the clinical area.

The mentee is responsible for contributing to their training. They must make their clinical mentor / line manager aware if there are any issues blocking development.

How to Use the Framework

The Competency Framework is designed to be used by both the manager and staff member to aid the appraisal process and to support any personal development plans around sexual health competency and skills assessment.

Step 1:

The manager and staff member identify a competency or standard of practice that needs to be achieved.

Step 2:

The manager and staff member identify and agree the most appropriate method to achieve and/ or assess the identified competencies, and a reasonable timeframe for that.

Step 3:

The manager and staff member evaluate whether the competency has been achieved, and reflect on any further development and ongoing assessment.

Step 4:

The manager and clinical mentor should establish that when the competency is signed off, it reflects best practice at the time.

Examples of Learning and Assessment Methods

- Reflective practice
- Report by team members on observations/joint sessions
- Written assignments
- Review of written records
- Observation of practice
- Delivering training and presentation
- One to one review
- Developing a resource for the service
- Formal course attendance
- Evidence of previous learning and competence
- Client feedback if applicable
- Clinical supervision

Mandatory Reference Documents

(This list is not exhaustive)

- STI management guidelines
- Contraception guidelines
- Infection Control guidelines
- Child Protection guidelines
- Pregnancy testing and TOP guidelines
- Vulnerable Adult Policy and guidelines

Contents

1.0	Communication	6
2.0	Sexual History Taking and Triage	7
3.0	Asymptomatic Screening	8
4.0	General Review of Contraception Options	9
5.0	Pregnancy Testing	10
6.0	Condom Education and Distribution	11
7.0	Termination of Pregnancy: Assisted Self-Referral	12
8.0	Chaperoning	13
9.0	Managing Specimens	14
10.0	Health Promotion and Sign Posting to Local Services	15
11.0	Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults	16
Appendix	Learning Plan Template	

Competence 1: Communication

Minimum Standard

The member of staff will be able to:

- Communicate effectively with clients and colleagues

Knowledge and Skills Framework

- Core dimension 1: Communication
- Core dimension 6: Equality & Diversity

Indicators

-
- | | |
|------|--|
| 1.1 | Introduce self to client |
| 1.2 | Establish how the client prefers to be addressed |
| 1.3 | Identify client's communication style, language and cultural needs |
| 1.4 | Demonstrate rapport building and empathy with a client during interactions or history taking |
| 1.5 | Demonstrate good communication skills: active listening and non-verbal communication |
| 1.6 | Demonstrate understanding of informed consent and confidentiality |
| 1.7 | Recognise barriers when taking a sexual history or managing a consultation: embarrassment, fear, language |
| 1.8 | Recognise own communication style; avoid inappropriate styles (e.g. "darling"; "yeah?") |
| 1.9 | Valuing the diversity of the service user <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Recognise impact of personal attitudes towards sexual health■ Understand the impact of these attitudes during a consultation, |
| 1.10 | Recognise how a judgemental approach may negatively impact on the client and consultation |
| 1.11 | Communicate effectively with colleagues and other professionals using a variety of communication styles, including face-to-face, telephone, written and email |
| 1.12 | Keep records in line with service standards |
| 1.13 | Communicate appropriately when referring to a more senior colleague |
| 1.14 | Able to use a variety of sexual health names/terminology to suit clients' needs |
-

Competence 2: Sexual History Taking & Triage

Minimum Standard

The member of staff will be able to:

- Recognise their own role in accordance with local agreed guidelines and scope of practice
- Work within agreed boundaries and guidelines
- Refer to colleagues when outside guidelines

Knowledge and Skills Framework

- Core Dimension 1: Communication
- Core Dimension 3: Health, Safety and Security
- Core Dimension 4: Service Improvement
- Core Dimension 5: Quality
- Core Dimension 6: Equality and Diversity
- Health & Wellbeing 1-10
- Information & Knowledge 1-3

Indicators

-
- | | |
|-------|---|
| 2.1 | Explain the scope of your role to client when referring on to a senior clinical colleague |
| <hr/> | |
| 2.2 | Demonstrate skill in taking a full sexual history |
| <hr/> | |
| 2.3 | Encourage clients' full participation in the history taking process and assessment |
| <hr/> | |
| 2.4 | Ask appropriate questions to assess for STI symptoms |
| <hr/> | |
| 2.5 | Ask appropriate questions around current contraceptive and condom use |
| <hr/> | |
| 2.6 | Keep records in line with service standards |
| <hr/> | |
| 2.7 | Refer to and communicate effectively with colleagues when referring a client |
| <hr/> | |
| 2.8 | Identify any child protection issues or any vulnerable adults, and discuss these cases immediately with senior clinical colleague |
| <hr/> | |
| 2.9 | Demonstrate knowledge of Fraser guidelines |
| <hr/> | |
| 2.10 | Refer all clients to senior clinical colleague, regardless of age, if there are signs of any possible vulnerability: age, immaturity, mental health issues, substance misuse, abuse, coercion, or there are worries about any vulnerability |
-

Competence 3: Asymptomatic Screening

Minimum Standard

The member of staff will be able to

- Take an appropriate sexual history and offer asymptomatic screening when a client has no symptoms

Knowledge and Skills Framework

- Core Dimension 1: Communication
- Core Dimension 3: Health, Safety and Security
- Core Dimension 4: Service Improvement
- Core Dimension 5: Quality
- Core Dimension 6: Equality and Diversity
- Health & Wellbeing
- Information & Knowledge 1-3

Indicators

-
- | | |
|-----|---|
| 3.1 | Assess risk of STIs with history taking skills |
| 3.2 | Explain the purpose of asymptomatic screening |
| 3.3 | Explain how to take an appropriate urine sample |
| 3.4 | Explain to female client how to take a self-taken vaginal swab |
| 3.5 | Provide adequate information via screening forms or leaflets |
| 3.6 | Give a clear explanation of how results will be given and managed |
| 3.7 | Ensure correct contact details for client |
| 3.8 | Encourage condom use and safer sex until results are known |
| 3.9 | Offer sign-posting for full STI screen |
-

Competence 4: General Review of Contraception Options

Minimum Standard

The member of staff will be able to:

- Demonstrate a general understanding of various contraceptive methods as per FPA – Your Guide to Contraception leaflet

Knowledge and Skills Framework

- Core Dimension 1: Communication
- Information & Knowledge 1-3

Indicators

-
- | | |
|-----|---|
| 4.1 | Offer client the 'FPA – Your Guide to Contraception' leaflet as a general guide to contraception |
| 4.2 | Verbalise generic effectiveness, how it works, advantages and disadvantages of different contraceptive methods as per the leaflet |
| 4.3 | Discuss how the client can access contraception |
| 4.4 | Show awareness of the barriers to using contraception (age, cultural issues, side effects) |
| 4.5 | Give FPA leaflets for any specific/relevant contraceptive methods that the client is interested in |
| 4.6 | Record the consultation and any leaflets given accurately |
-

Competence 5: Pregnancy Testing

Minimum Standard

The member of staff will be able to:

- Follow local clinical pathway for pregnancy testing

Knowledge and Skills Framework

- Core Dimension 1: Communication
- Core Dimension 3: Health, Safety and Security
- Core Dimension 4: Service Improvement
- Core Dimension 5: Quality
- Core Dimension 6: Equality and Diversity
- Health & Wellbeing
- Information & Knowledge 1-3

Indicators

-
- | | |
|-----|---|
| 5.1 | Take an adequate history including age, last menstrual period (LMP), pain, bleeding, health history, contraceptive history and last sexual intercourse to rule out need for emergency contraception |
| 5.2 | Explain pregnancy testing adequately to the client |
| 5.3 | Perform the pregnancy test to the manufacturer's recommendation |
| 5.4 | Communicate results to the client |
| 5.5 | Give information per guideline or refer to a senior clinical colleague for management if outside guidelines |
| 5.6 | Document clearly any information given to the client or any follow-up |
| 5.7 | Support client to self manage where appropriate |
-

Competence 6: Condom Education & Distribution

Minimum Standard

The member of staff will be able to:

- Provide accurate condom education and demonstration
- Distribute condoms and lubricants according to local guidelines

Knowledge and Skills Framework

- Core Dimension 1: Communication
- Core Dimension 3: Health, Safety and Security
- Core Dimension 4: Service Improvement
- Core Dimension 5: Quality
- Core Dimension 6: Equality and Diversity
- Health & Wellbeing
- Information & Knowledge 1-3

Indicators

-
- | | |
|-----|---|
| 6.1 | Take an appropriate history to identify any risks for STI or pregnancy |
| 6.2 | Show awareness of different types and styles of condom, and offer a range acceptable to the client |
| 6.3 | Offer female condom as an alternative to the male condom |
| 6.4 | Assess for any latex allergy |
| 6.5 | Show awareness of barriers to using condoms |
| 6.6 | Offer clients information on male and female condoms, emergency contraception for any failures, and STI information |
| 6.7 | Offer asymptomatic screen if appropriate or sign post for a STI screen |
| 6.8 | Use FPA – Your Guide to Male and Female Condoms |
| 6.9 | Support client to self manage where appropriate |
-

Competence 7: Termination of Pregnancy: Assisted Self-Referral

Minimum Standard

The member of staff will be able to:

- Describe self-referral process to client clearly
- Assess any issues needing referral to senior clinical colleague(s)
- Follow clinical pathway

Knowledge and Skills Framework

- Core Dimension 1: Communication
- Core Dimension 3: Health, Safety and Security
- Core Dimension 4: Service Improvement
- Core Dimension 5: Quality
- Core Dimension 6: Equality and Diversity
- Health & Wellbeing
- Information & Knowledge 1-3

Indicators

-
- | | |
|-----|---|
| 7.1 | Assess client's choice on managing pregnancy and abortion |
| 7.2 | Allow client to express any issues around abortion |
| 7.3 | Refer any client expressing signs or symptoms of stress (confusion, tearfulness etc) to a senior clinical colleague |
| 7.4 | Be able to describe the relevant abortion process clearly and appropriately |
| 7.5 | Offer FPA – Your Guide To Contraception leaflet |
-

Competence 8: Chaperoning

Minimum Standard

The member of staff will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the principles and practice of chaperoning
- Work as a chaperone in accordance with local policy

Knowledge and Skills Framework

- Core Dimension 1: Communication
- Core Dimension 3: Health, Safety and Security
- Health & Wellbeing
- Information & Knowledge 1-3

Indicators

-
- | | |
|-----|--|
| 8.1 | Assist colleague during clinical examinations |
| 8.2 | Take all measures to maintain the client's privacy, dignity and wishes |
| 8.3 | Promote and advocate the rights of the individual during clinical examinations |
| 8.4 | Identify signs of client discomfort during examination and provide reassurance |
| 8.5 | Apply knowledge of health and safety during the examination |
| 8.6 | Apply knowledge regarding infection control issue during examinations |
| 8.7 | Manage any specimens as required |
| 8.8 | Report any issues or concerns to clinical mentor or line manager |
-

Competence 9: Managing Specimens

Minimum Standard

The member of staff will be able to:

- Handle and manage specimens following local guidance for Health & Safety and Infection Control

Knowledge and Skills Framework

- Core Dimension 1: Communication
- Core Dimension 3: Health, Safety and Security
- Information & Knowledge 1-3

Indicators

-
- | | |
|-----|--|
| 9.1 | Demonstrate awareness of clinical requirements for particular specimens |
| 9.2 | Label, prepare and store specimens and samples correctly, adhering to Health & Safety and Infection Control Policies |
| 9.3 | Complete correct forms and fill in appropriate information on specimen request forms |
| 9.4 | Communicate results management process to client |
-

Competence 10: Health Promotion & Sign-Posting to Local Services

Minimum Standard

The member of staff will be able to:

- Provide holistic information about aspects of sexual and general health

Knowledge and Skills Framework

- Core Dimension 1: Communication
- Information & Knowledge 1-3

Indicators

-
- 10.1 Sign-post clients to appropriate services within local area
 - 10.2 Inform client on how to register with a local general practice if not registered
 - 10.3 Provide relevant information to enable client to make informed choices
 - 10.4 Show awareness of local clinics and access to current timetable and service leaflets
 - 10.5 Use local referral pathways to ease referral process for the client
 - 10.6 Show awareness of holistic services locally that impact on health (smoking cessation, diet, obesity, exercise, alcohol, etc)
 - 10.7 Help clients to manage risk reduction, skills building, partner notification, and referral to local health adviser
-

Competence 11: Child Protection & Vulnerable Adults

Minimum Standard

The member of staff will be able to:

- Work to local child and vulnerable adult protection procedures and guidelines
- Share any child and vulnerable adult protection issues immediately with a senior clinical colleague

Knowledge and Skills Framework

- Core Dimension 1: Communication
- Core Dimension 3: Health, Safety and Security
- Information & Knowledge 1-3

Indicators

-
- 11.1 Demonstrate an understanding of local policies
 - 11.2 Show awareness of boundaries within own role
 - 11.3 Show awareness of national guidance to consent and confidentiality – and apply it appropriately
 - 11.4 Knowledge of Fraser Guidelines
 - 11.5 Refer all under-18s to a senior clinical colleague according to local policy
 - 11.6 Attend mandatory child protection and vulnerable adult protection training according to local policy
-

Appendix: Learning Plan Template

Learning Plan for:	Work Place	Mentor/supervisor/assessor
<p>INITIAL ASSESSMENT:</p> <p>Competent in:</p> <p>Some experience of:</p> <p>New to:</p> <p>Evidence seen:</p>		<p>Contact details:</p> <p>Assessor Signature:</p> <p>Trainee Signature:</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>Next Assessment Date:</p>

Learning Plan for:	Work Place	Mentor/supervisor/assessor
<p>INITIAL ASSESSMENT:</p> <p>Competent in:</p> <p>Some experience of:</p> <p>New to:</p> <p>Evidence seen:</p>		<p>Contact details:</p> <p>Assessor Signature:</p> <p>Trainee Signature:</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>Next Assessment Date:</p>

Appendix: Learning Plan Template

Learning Objective	Planned Activity	Achieved Date & Assessor Signature
Learning Objective	Planned Activity	Achieved Date & Assessor Signature
Learning Objective	Planned Activity	Achieved Date & Assessor Signature