

11 November 2010

Dear All,

A Simple and Flexible approach to the KSF and Appraisal

We are writing personally to every NHS Board to update you on recent progress made by the NHS Staff Council in agreeing the simplification of the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF), and to encourage you to make use of the new guidance where it will assist you in ensuring that the KSF is fully implemented in your organisations.

Before embarking on this review, we listened to employers some of whom told us they found the framework too complex and time-consuming to implement. We have acted on these concerns and produced a new simplified KSF, making it a more flexible, adaptable tool that employers can tailor to meet local needs. This approach has a proven track record as it draws on existing good practice from within the service.

The documentation has been produced, working in close partnership with representatives from staff and employers and is available on the NHS Employers' website.

All organisations should of course be working towards 100% appraisal rates, as measured by the staff survey. Effective use of the KSF tool can deliver that for your Agenda for Change workforce. The KSF now focuses on six simplified core dimensions that apply to every job and it has tools, tips and templates for trusts to tailor to local needs. It also allows flexibility for organisations to use the KSF as originally developed – which we know a number of organisations are keen to do.

Looking at the wider context - it will help you deliver the QIPP agenda, ensuring alignment between individual team and organisational objectives that will ultimately benefit patient care. Additionally, the KSF directly supports organisations in delivery of the NHS Constitution and ensuring staff receive access to suitable training as measured through effective appraisal.

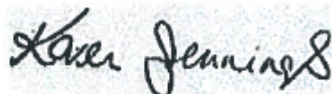
All NHS Boards should have a named lead responsible for appraisal, CPD and KSF within the organisation and it is important to ensure that the KSF guidance and tools provided can be used fully to the benefit of the organisation, staff and patients.

Yours sincerely

Simon Burns MP
Minister of State for Health

Karen Jennings
NHS Trade Unions

Gill Bellord
NHS Employers

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