

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR USING THE NOVAS GROUP COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

1.0 WHAT IS A COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK?

1.1 A competency framework covers the whole process of achieving a task, not just the skills and knowledge needed. Most importantly, it focuses on the **behaviours** that should be displayed when people are working in the Novas 'way'. It gives everyone in Novas a common set of standards for how we should behave if we are to do our jobs effectively and treat our customers and colleagues with respect.

1.2 **Competencies** are distinct from the individual **objectives** that are agreed as part of the performance review process. **Objectives** help you to be clear about **what** you need to achieve in your job. **Competencies** enable you to look at **how** you do your job and help answer the questions:

"What do I have to be good at to be effective in my job?"

"How do I know that I am carrying out my job effectively?"

2.0 WHAT WILL IT BE USED FOR?

2.1 The Novas Group Competency framework has been developed in consultation with members of staff and the Senior Management Team. It is used as an assessment and development tool for:

- recruitment and selection;
- probation;
- promotion;
- performance review; and
- training and development.

2.2 For example, as part of the recruitment process, candidates will be asked to give examples on the application form of how they have behaved or what they have achieved in certain situations. The interview will be focused on these examples and will ask the candidate questions such as:

- What was your role in this particular situation?
- Were there any potential barriers or pitfalls?
- How did you overcome them?
- What were the particular successes?
- Is there anything you would have done differently?

2.3 By using probing questions such as these, the interview panel will be able to assess whether the candidate has the right attitude and approach and what they personally have actually achieved and thus whether s/he will be suitable for the role. The panel will also take into account past experience and knowledge to demonstrate competency and give an overall assessment of the candidate's suitability for the post.

3.0 WHAT DOES THE FRAMEWORK CONSIST OF?

3.1 The framework has six key elements that reflect Novas' core values:

- **Manages performance to deliver results**
- **Communicates effectively**
- **Delivers service improvements and is customer focused**
- **Values others**
- **Develops self and others**
- **Works effectively as part of a team**

There are also role specific competencies comprising of:

- **Operational Effectiveness**
- **Professional Knowledge**
- **Financial Management**
- **Information Technology**
- **Project Management**

3.2 For each of these elements, the framework contains descriptions of behaviours that demonstrate how everyone in Novas should put the core values into practice. For example, we show that we are **Valuing Others** by treating people with respect and by challenging anyone who is guilty of harassment, bullying or discrimination.

3.3 The core competencies do not attempt to describe all the specialist skills and knowledge that are needed by certain groups of staff, e.g. IT or specialist support workers. Job holders and line managers can therefore supplement the competencies set out in the **Role Specific Competencies** section of the core framework with additional competencies and priorities that are relevant to a particular post.

3.4 Generally **Level 1** is the competency standard for all front-line posts, **Level 2** (including **Level 1**) for team leader / manager posts, **Level 3** (including **Level 1** and **2**) for middle and senior managers. Specific role competencies have been identified for each post.

3.5 All candidates will need to demonstrate the competencies specific for the job.

3.6 For Novas core competencies consider the levels specified, and in your application form, please state examples from your work, learning or life experiences of how you can show you have behaved in the competency area.

3.7 There are examples, given for the different levels, in the framework document.

3.8 You do not have to demonstrate all of them, but one or two real examples are required.

3.9 The requirements panel will then assess how well you have demonstrated the competencies, and will invite the candidates who best meet them for interview.

- 3.10 The interview / assessment process will then further test you against these competencies with a selection made for appointment on the candidate / s who best meet the competencies for the job.