

Getting the most from the KSF

– how to link it with CPD

By Helen Middleton, MRPharmS, Laura O’Loan, MRPharmS and Sneha Varia, MRPharmS

The NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) will be used as a personal development tool for all NHS staff. This article looks at how the KSF can be linked to the CPD cycle and considers resources that pharmacy staff can use to help them get the most out of the KSF



Defining and describing the knowledge and skills that NHS staff need to apply in their work, in order to deliver quality services, is the function of the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF). It provides a consistent, comprehensive and explicit framework on which to base review and development for all staff.¹ The Department of Health (DoH) set a target for all NHS staff to have a KSF outline by the end of March 2006. The KSF outline sets out the KSF dimensions and levels that apply to a particular post. In a previous article in *Hospital Pharmacist*,² Cattell *et al* described the KSF and how to develop KSF outlines. The next challenge for hospital pharmacy is to start using the KSF for development reviews in order to meet the DoH target for all NHS staff to have had a personal development review (PDR) using their KSF post outline by September 2006.

Linking the KSF to CPD

The KSF development review process is an ongoing cycle of review, planning, development and evaluation for all NHS staff,

Helen Middleton is CPD manager at London Pharmacy Education & Training (LPE&T), **Laura O’Loan** is a pharmacy education and training specialist and was previously assistant director of LPE&T and **Sneha Varia** is specialist CPD facilitator at LPE&T

compared against the demands of their posts (as described in KSF outlines for those posts). It follows the same four stages as the continuing professional development (CPD) cycle (reflection, planning, action and evaluation). The draft Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians Order 2006 under Section 60 of the Health Act 1999³ has been circulated for consultation. If this order becomes law it will give the Royal Pharmaceutical Society the power to make CPD mandatory for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. Those working in the NHS will also need to demonstrate they meet the requirements of their KSF outline. It is therefore important that CPD and the KSF can be integrated to prevent duplication of effort.

The CPD team at London Pharmacy Education & Training (LPE&T) has gathered informal feedback from local CPD facilitators suggesting that a large number of pharmacy staff are finding it difficult to link CPD and the KSF. In response to this, LPE&T has developed two new resources — a KSF portfolio⁴ and an individual knowledge and skills analysis (IKSA) pack.⁵ A summary of how these help to integrate the KSF and CPD cycles is set out in Figure 1 (p212). Further details are included in the discussion of the KSF stages below.

Stage 1

The PDR is like an appraisal. All staff will need to demonstrate that they are meeting the KSF outline for their post. At the PDR

meeting, the postholder and the manager or reviewer must consider whether there is evidence that the postholder is achieving the desired level of performance in relation to each dimension of the postholder’s KSF outline. This involves reflecting on practice using the KSF outlines (reflection stage of the CPD cycle). CPD entries can provide good evidence that an individual is meeting their KSF outline.

A further link between the PDR and the reflection stage of the CPD cycle is that postholders can add their own competencies (KSF indicators) to “Plan and record” to help them answer the question: “To which areas of competence does this learning objective relate?”⁶ There are online tutorials at www.uptodate.org.uk which demonstrate how to add competencies to “Plan and record”.

However CPD entries are not the only methods of demonstrating evidence of competence in relation to the postholder’s KSF outline. Other types of evidence can be used, such as:

- Records of medicine information queries
- Records of interventions made
- Audit reports and projects
- Case presentations
- Records of drug histories taken
- Dispensing accuracy logs
- Reflective journal entries
- Significant event records
- Clinical certificates and diplomas

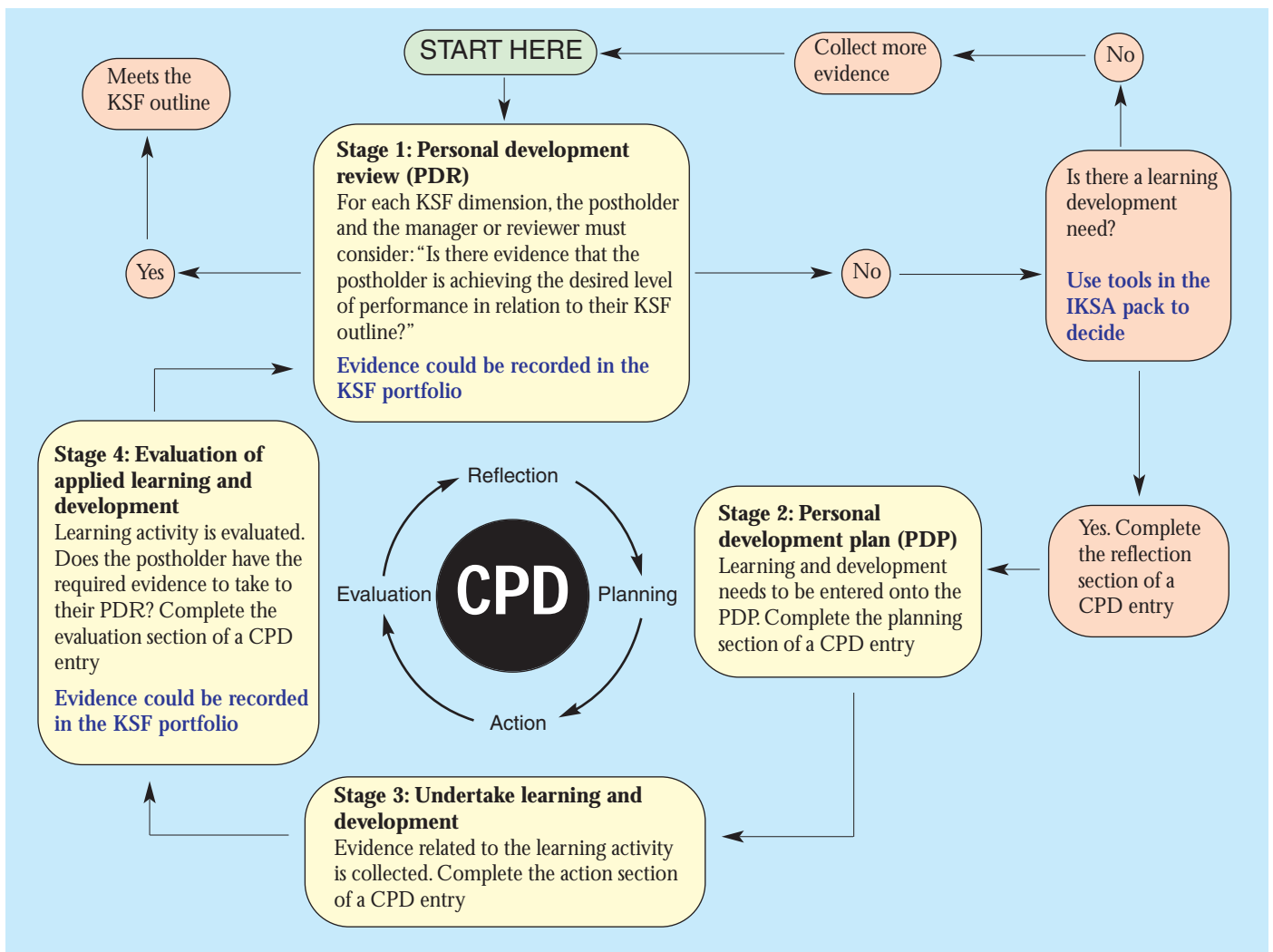


Figure 1. Diagrammatic representation of how the knowledge and skills framework (KSF) interlinks with continuing professional development (CPD) and of the potential role of London Pharmacy Education & Training's "KSF portfolio" and "individual knowledge and skills analysis" pack

- Records of training sessions attended and given
- Evidence collected for other competency frameworks
- Certificates from courses attended

The KSF portfolio is designed to help pharmacy staff get to grips with the KSF by helping them navigate their way through the KSF development review process and enabling them to record evidence, by providing them with information, advice

and easy-to-use recording forms. It is divided into a number of sections, as set out below:

- Section 1: Background information about the KSF and the KSF PDR process and frequently asked questions including links between CPD and the KSF
- Sections 2 to 4: Recording forms for personal and professional information and the individual's KSF outline

- Section 5: Information on evidence collection and a variety of evidence recording forms. These forms are designed to prompt individuals to make a specific link between the evidence they have collected and their KSF outline
- Section 6: Helps individuals to plan for their KSF PDR
- Section 7: Signposts individuals to the IKSA pack to help them develop a personal development plan (PDP)

Some frequently-asked questions (and answers) about the evidence needed for the KSF are set out in Panel 1.

— Stage 2

Stage 2 of the KSF PDR cycle relates to the planning stage of the CPD cycle and involves the development of a PDP. A PDP is a tool to help individuals review and plan their development in the short, medium and long term. Each individual's PDP will be informed by looking at their learning and development needs matched against the requirements of their KSF outline. It is difficult to separate stage 1 and stage 2 of the KSF development review cycle. In stage 1 the postholder and manager or reviewer consider which areas of the KSF outline the postholder is meeting and the evidence they have to demonstrate competence. Identification of learning and development needs for the PDP (stage 2) naturally follows on from this for areas of the KSF outline that the postholder is not meeting. Therefore the PDP is usually developed during the development review meeting.

It has been a Government requirement since April 2000 for all NHS staff to have a PDP.⁷ Feedback collected by LPE&T from local CPD facilitators indicates that this target is not being met and that a large number of pharmacy staff are finding it difficult to develop a PDP without support. In response to this, LPE&T developed the IKSA pack, which aims to support the individual, with the help of a CPD facilitator, manager or colleague, to develop a PDP to meet their KSF outline. The pack is suitable for staff to use once they have got to grips with recording their evidence using the KSF portfolio. The pack has been structured to specifically support the KSF PDP as it follows the same structure as the KSF PDP documentation:

- Section 1: Introduction
- Section 2: What is the development need?
- Section 3: What will I do to develop myself?
- Section 4: How will I know I have done this?

Panel 1: Frequently-asked questions (and answers) about evidence needed for the knowledge and skills framework (KSF)

- **How much evidence do I need to collect for my personal development review?**
The amount of evidence you collect depends on you and your manager. There is no correct amount. Quality, not quantity, is what matters. Hard paper evidence is easier to demonstrate — so try recording your experiences as you go along.
- **Does all my evidence need to be written?**
No. The KSF is not intended to be a “paper chase” and much of your evidence should be available naturally in your workplace because it is about what you do in your day-to-day job. You and your manager need to decide on what types of evidence you are to collect.
- **What are the benefits of using a portfolio?**
Your portfolio of evidence will act as a record of your development. It will be a beneficial reminder of how much you have achieved and can be shown to others, for example, your current or future employer as evidence of your achievements and experience. Using a portfolio also helps to keep you organised and ensures that all your evidence is kept in one place which helps you to prepare for your personal development review.

- Section 5: What is the date for planned completion?
- Section 6: What support do I need and where will I get it?
- Section 7: What are the barriers and how can I overcome them?

Working through each section of the IKSA pack enables individuals to complete each section of the KSF PDP. It uses a technique called “gap analysis” to help individuals to determine the gap between where they are and where they want to be with regards to their KSF outline. Gap analysis requires the individual to ask themselves the following questions:

- Where am I now?
- Where do I want to be (eg, at the foundation gateway or to achieve the full KSF outline for my post, or possibly to achieve the KSF outline for the next job I want to apply for, if planning for career progression)?
- What do I need to do to get to where I want to be (ie, identify the learning and development need and methods to meet the need)?
- How will I know when I have reached my destination (ie, consideration of the types of evidence of competence)?

Various tools and techniques in the IKSA pack are used to support personal skills analysis and personal development planning. For example, section 2 of the pack contains tools to help individuals perform a self-audit of knowledge and skills against their KSF outline, in order to assess where they are now and compare this to where they need to be. A self-audit of knowledge and skills may result in the identification of learning needs and therefore enable the individual to answer the question “What is the development need?” A “job tree” (similar to those developed by staff at the Ashridge Business School, Hertfordshire) is one method that can be used to perform this self-audit. An example of a job tree, together with details about how it can be drawn up and used are set out in Figure 2 (p214).

Having identified a learning and development need, the individual can move on to section 3 of the pack. This involves answering the question “What will I do to develop myself?” More tools to help pharmacists to identify appropriate learning methods to meet the development needs they have identified are also contained in this section.

At the end of each section of the pack, “PDP” and “CPD” symbols prompt the individual to complete their PDP and record their CPD.

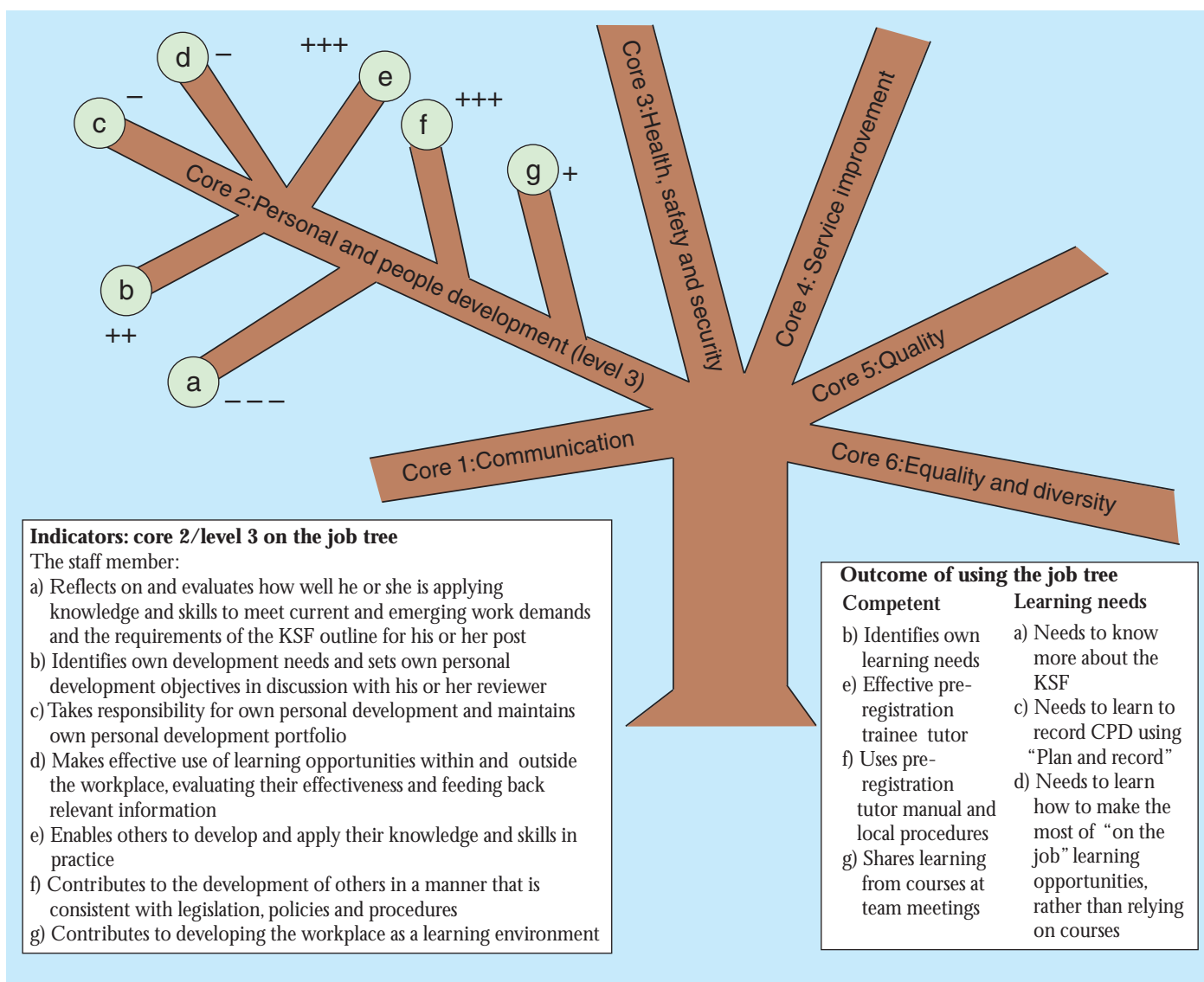


Figure 2. An example of a "job tree". Each main branch represents a dimension of the post-holder's KSF outline. Smaller branches represent the indicators (ie, competencies), in this case, a) to g). Once the job tree is drawn up, the post-holder should consider what aspects of their job relate to each dimension and indicator. They should then rate how competent or effective they are at each dimension and indicator using a scale, for example, "+++" for "very competent or effective" to "----" for "not very competent or effective" and

make a note of the evidence they have to show they are competent, where they have indicated that this is the case. Areas where knowledge and skills need to be developed will be highlighted by this approach and learning needs can be decided on (as set out in the "outcome of using the job tree" panel). Once this process has been completed for every branch, the post-holder should also consider whether there are any patterns to their learning needs — eg, are the majority of the minus signs on the same branch?

Stage 3

The individual then undertakes their chosen learning activity in order to complete stage 3. Using the KSF portfolio here encourages individuals to collect evidence, and also to complete the action stage of the CPD cycle.

Stage 4

Stage 4 of the KSF PDR cycle involves evaluating the learning activity. The KSF portfolio encourages individuals to complete the evaluation stage of the CPD cycle, and to "close the loop" by reflecting on whether they have accumulated the required evidence to take to their PDR (stage 1).

Summary

This article describes how the KSF and CPD entries interlink and can be used together throughout the whole KSF PDR cycle. It also discusses the KSF portfolio and the IKSA pack, which LPE&T has developed to support the introduction of the KSF. These resources are available from the LPE&T website (see www.londonpharmacy.nhs.uk/educationandtraining)

References

1. Department of Health. The NHS knowledge and skills framework (NHS KSF) and the development review process. London: The Department; 2004.
2. Cattell, R. Thornton, D. and Mitchell, L. Competency frameworks – how they apply to

hospital pharmacists. *Hospital Pharmacist* 2005;12:221–3.

3. Department of Health. Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians Order 2006: A paper for consultation. London: Department of Health; 2006.
4. Royal Pharmaceutical Society. Plan and record. Available at www.uptodate.org.uk (accessed 23 May 2006).
5. London Pharmacy Education & Training. KSF portfolio. Available at www.londonpharmacy.nhs.uk/educationandtraining (accessed 23 May 2006).
6. Department of Health. The New NHS: A first class service HSC 1998/113. London: The Department; 1998.
7. London Pharmacy Education & Training. Individual knowledge and skills analysis (IKSA) pack. Available at www.londonpharmacy.nhs.uk/educationandtraining (accessed 23 May 2006).