

Competency Guide

1. Skills Development

Definition

Ability to demonstrate commitment to ensuring a balance between national, regional and local delivery that fits with the expectations of our customers, our partners and stakeholders and the Scottish Government. Regardless of role or level the ability to demonstrate a sound general knowledge of Skills Development principles and how they apply in the current role is vital.

Indicators – SDS5, SDS6 SDS7

Positive Indicators

- Understands the role of SDS within Scotland's Skills Strategy and the contribution of skills/learning/guidance to economic success
- Knowledgeable about SDS business, goals, activities and objectives
- Awareness of national and local needs and trends
- Identifies and effectively delegates expertise of staff and teams to meet needs of internal and external customers, partners and stakeholders

Negative Indicators

- Actions/decisions taken are not clearly aligned to skills/learning/guidance needs of customers, partners and stakeholders
- Lack of clarity on how their role impacts on SDS service delivery
- Focus on own role/team/objectives limits ability to effectively promote and deliver the wider expertise and services of SDS
- Fails to make connections and to relate to the wider economic and political context

Indicators – SDS1, SDS2, SDS3 and SDS4

Positive Indicators

- Understands the role of SDS within Scotland's Skills Strategy and the contribution of skills/learning/guidance to economic success
- Understand how they can contribute to SDS business, goals, activities and objectives
- Awareness of customer needs and trends in their locality/area of expertise
- Understands roles of and collaborates with colleagues to ensure customers receive positive experiences of SDS service delivery
- Shares personal expertise, skills and knowledge of Skills Development to support colleagues to meet needs of internal and external customers, partners and stakeholders

Negative Indicators

- Actions/decisions taken are not clearly aligned to skills/learning/guidance needs of customers, partners and stakeholders
- Lack of clarity on how their role impacts on SDS service delivery
- Focus on own role and objectives limits ability to effectively promote seamless service delivery for customers and clients e.g. limited evidence of involving appropriate expertise available in-house

2. Analysis and Problem Solving

Definition

Ability to research, analyse and evaluate information in order to resolve challenges and problems and develop solutions.

Indicators – SDS5, SDS6 SDS7

Positive Indicators

- Uses a range of skills / techniques / resources to ensure possible solutions take account of any underpinning issues
- Considers how potential solutions will impact on priorities, other activities, colleagues, partners etc (positive and negative)
- Will challenge others to ensure validity and strength of decisions/solutions/projects etc
- Can substantiate effectiveness of decisions taken with sound evidence (records, reports, client/customer feedback etc)
- Considers the risks associated with potential solutions
- Evaluates activity and outcomes to ensure continuous development and achievement of business objectives

Negative Indicators

- Makes decisions based only on personal views, experience and expertise
- Defers decision making/identification of solutions until **all** information is received
- Stalls and delays to avoid accountability for decisions taken
- Leaves problems to escalate or for others to deal with
- Focus is only on the immediate or short term impact of decisions and actions
- Allows existing practice and procedure to influence decisions where new approaches could enhance service delivery

Indicators – SDS1, SDS2, SDS3 and SDS4

Positive Indicators

- Uses a range of skills / techniques / resources to ensure possible solutions take account of any underpinning issues
- Considers how potential solutions will impact on priorities, other activities, colleagues, partners etc (positive and negative)
- Will challenge others to ensure validity and strength of decisions/solutions/projects etc
- Can substantiate effectiveness of actions taken with sound evidence (records, reports, client/customer feedback etc)
- Considers the risks associated with potential solutions
- Reflects on activity and outcomes to ensure effectiveness and continuous development of service delivery to clients and customers

Negative Indicators

- Makes decisions based only on personal views, experience and expertise
- Defers decision making/identification of solutions until **all** information is received
- Stalls and delays to avoid accountability for decisions taken
- Leaves problems to escalate or for others to deal with
- Focus is only on the immediate or short term impact of decisions and actions
- Allows existing practice and procedure to influence decisions where new approaches could enhance service delivery

3. Innovation and Creativity

Definition

Ability to develop new approaches and respond effectively to novel situations, tasks and activities at strategic and/or operational level

Indicators – SDS5, SDS6 SDS7

Positive Indicators

- Explores and proposes alternative or novel solutions to improve service delivery
- Promotes implementation of new techniques to improve methods and procedures
- Willingly accepts and embraces change – sees opportunities more than problems
- Willing to take risks having considered consequences

Negative Indicators

- Reluctance to consider new ideas or make changes to working practices
- Reluctance to be involved in challenging or unfamiliar situations
- Approach to problem resolution lacks creativity or innovation
- Limits or dismisses opportunities for others to develop new approaches to services
- Struggles when presented with barriers and obstacles
- Is too busy 'fire fighting' to look for new opportunities

Indicators – SDS1, SDS2, SDS3 and SDS4

Positive Indicators

- Contributes to development of alternative or novel solutions to improve service delivery (by suggesting ideas for and/or becoming actively involved in development of new approaches)
- Welcomes introduction of new techniques to improve methods and procedures
- Willingly accepts and embraces change – sees opportunities more than problems
- Willing to take risks having considered consequences

Negative Indicators

- Reluctance to consider new ideas or make changes to working practices
- Generally avoids challenging or unfamiliar situations
- Dismisses contribution others make in developing new approaches to services
- Struggles when presented with barriers and obstacles
- Is too busy 'fire fighting' to become involved in/volunteer for new approaches and opportunities

4. Leadership and Managing People

Definition

Contribute to the leadership of people by:

- upholding and promoting the culture and ambitions of SDS
- Influencing and providing guidance to ensure that change is a positive experience for teams.
- Motivating, managing and inspiring others to perform
- Accepting responsibility for people management including planning and co-ordinating their workloads and development.

Indicators – SDS5, SDS6 SDS7

Positive Indicators

- Models the behaviours and values expected of SDS all staff
- Motivates staff, generating enthusiasm and commitment for the vision and goals of SDS
- Leads by example in identifying and addressing development needs
- Makes time and resource available to identify and address development needs of staff/teams
- Understands individuals' strengths, development needs and aspirations and how these can be used towards achieving business objectives
- Seeks out and uses feedback from staff and colleagues to address their concerns
- Shares information in order to allow people to understand what they have to do and the context in which work is undertaken

Negative Indicators

- Lacks awareness of the impact of change and uncertainty on staff
- Reluctance to tackle performance issues with teams/staff
- Avoids making unpopular decisions
- Allows 'pressure of work' to restrict personal development and development of others
- Task and objective focussed at the expense of leading, managing and developing people (or vice versa?)
- Reluctance to delegate - constricts development/experience of others and hinders succession planning
- Fails to communicate clear messages about the direction of and implications for the team
- Takes credit for the work of the team

Indicators – SDS1, SDS2, SDS3 and SDS4

Positive Indicators

- Models the behaviours and values expected of SDS all staff
- Motivates colleagues, generating enthusiasm and commitment for SDS service delivery
- Shares skills, knowledge and information with colleagues to allow them to develop within their roles
- Understands personal strengths, development needs and aspirations and how these can be used towards supporting the team in service delivery
- Seeks out and uses feedback from customers and colleagues on effectiveness within role

Negative Indicators

- Lacks understanding of the impact of change and uncertainty on colleagues
- Fails to perform to required standards
- Avoids unpopular tasks and/or leading on tasks or projects
- Avoids active participation in team events and meetings
- Reluctance to become involved in/volunteer for projects and tasks beyond role requirements

5. Relationship Management

Definition

Team working – contribute to team objectives, coordinate and network among and across teams

Partnership working – develops and maintains effective relationships with key partners in the achievement SDS objectives.

Networking – seeks out and maintains external and internal relationships to promote information/ideas sharing, influence decision making and raise the profile of SDS.

Indicators – SDS5, SDS6 SDS7

Team Working

Positive Indicators

- Promotes the use of (cross-functional) team work to achieve strategic and operational goals
- Recognises and respects the differences (characteristics and ways of working) that exist within teams
- Values and makes best use of colleagues' expertise and skills
- Shares important information, resources and skills to ensure success of a team
- Takes action to resolve conflict within and between teams

Negative Indicators

- Places own preference, priorities and interests ahead of those of the team
- Protective of own teams' resources
- Unaware of how others perceive the team and its performance
- Leaves conflict unresolved
- Blames others when things go wrong
- Doesn't use the combined strength of the team to support them in their own areas of weakness

Partnership Working

Positive Indicators

- Maintains awareness of skills/learning/guidance sector and political environment
- Establishes, develops and maintains relationships with diverse and relevant stakeholder organisations
- Seeks out and takes account of partner and stakeholder views and feedback regarding planning, provision and service delivery
- Understands how partners' priorities will impact on our service provision and delivery

Negative Indicators

- Absence of partnership activity with broad and diverse communities
- Reactive rather than proactive in anticipating needs of partners, customers etc
- Over-promises and under-delivers
- Shows little or no understanding of stakeholders' perspectives
- Does not share, or shares inappropriate, information with stakeholders

Networking

Positive Indicators

- Takes time to develop and continuously review key relationships within the skills/learning/guidance sector and with key individuals therein

Negative Indicators

- Has a limited network of contacts
- Lacks awareness and understanding of the networking opportunities within the SDS organisational structure

Continues overleaf

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts to build credibility, trust and mutual understanding when representing SDS across a range of stakeholders/networks • Is aware of and responds positively to needs of contacts within own networks • Provides a consistently professional and effective point of contact for all customers and stakeholders • Has access to a range of different information sources which ensures easy access to relevant and current data • Participates in external work and social events as appropriate in order to strengthen relationships and enhance network of contacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not seek out, value or make best use of contacts with political influence
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Indicators – SDS1, SDS2, SDS3 and SDS4

Team Working	
<p>Positive Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works with and for colleagues across a range of functions to achieve operational goals • Recognises and respects the differences (characteristics and ways of working) that exist within their team(s) • Values and makes best use of colleagues' expertise and skills • Shares important information, resources and skills to ensure success of a team • Takes action to resolve conflict within and between teams 	<p>Negative Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places own preference, priorities and interests ahead of those of the team • Protective of own job role and tasks • Lacks understanding of their role within a team • Blames others when things go wrong • Doesn't use the combined strength of the team to support them in their own areas of weakness

Partnership Working

<p>Positive Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains awareness of key partners in skills/learning/ guidance sector within their locality/function • Establishes, develops and maintains relationships with stakeholder organisations relevant to service delivery • Seeks out and takes account of partner and stakeholder views and feedback regarding planning, provision and service delivery • Understands how partners' priorities will impact on own work and service delivery 	<p>Negative Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reluctance to engage with partners sharing same client groups • Over-promises and under-delivers • Shows little or no awareness of key stakeholders and partners • Does not share, or shares inappropriate, information with partners <p><i>Continues overleaf</i></p>
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Networking

Positive Indicators

- Takes time to develop and continuously review relationships with key individuals who share same client/customer groups
- Acts to build credibility, trust and mutual understanding when representing SDS across a range of stakeholders/networks
- Is aware of and responds positively to needs of contacts within own networks
- Provides a consistently professional and effective point of contact for all customers and stakeholders
- Has access to a range of different information sources which ensures easy access to relevant and current data

Negative Indicators

- Network of contacts is limited
- Lacks awareness and understanding of the networking opportunities within the SDS organisational structure
- Does not seek out, value or make best use of contacts with influence in their area of work

6. Customer Focus

Definition

The focus is on both internal and external customers. This is the ability to develop and/or deliver services and solutions which are relevant to customers' needs and build relationships to ensure all customers are satisfied with the services provided

SDS5, SDS6 SDS7

Positive Indicators

- Knows their customers and stakeholders are both internally and externally
- Operates (and supports staff to operate) with impartiality, fairness, diplomacy and to promote equality of opportunity for all
- Seeks out and takes positive action in response to customer feedback on service delivery

Negative Indicators

- Shows little or no understanding of customers' needs or perspective
- Inconsistent in delivering results for customers
- Over-promises and under-delivers
- Places greater priority on process, policy and procedure for service delivery than on customer needs

SDS1, SDS2, SDS3 and SDS4

Positive Indicators

- Understands who internal and external customers are
- Operates with impartiality, fairness, diplomacy and to promote equality of opportunity for all
- Seeks out and takes positive action in response to customer feedback on service delivery

Negative Indicators

- Shows little or no understanding of customers' needs or perspective
- Inconsistent in delivering results for customers
- Over-promises and under-delivers
- Places greater priority on process, policy and procedure for service delivery than on customer needs

7. Communication

Definition

The ability to communicate openly, honestly and clearly in a timely manner using written, oral and electronic means to meet the needs of your audience whether inside or outside SDS. In addition the ability to recognise and respond effectively to the emotional demands and potential risk to health and welfare arising from direct contact with challenging clients/involving difficult client relationships.

SDS5, SDS6 SDS7

Positive Indicators

- Consistently presents a positive first impression of self and SDS
- Prepares for internal and external meetings and events by anticipating potential reactions – positive or negative – and how to address these
- Actively encourages and makes use of feedback from others to adapt communication style, format and content to ensure others' understanding
- Can present complex and ambiguous information/ideas in a user friendly fashion
- Demonstrates ability to listen to and **hear** the messages of others
- Displays an awareness of and ability to deal effectively with personal and others' emotions when managing difficult situations

Negative Indicators

- Uses jargon and complex terminology regardless of audience
- Lacks confidence in making effective use of technology
- Does not consider the differing needs of individuals or specific groups when communicating a message to a wide audience
- Goes into unnecessary detail and easily loses the attention of others

SDS1, SDS2, SDS3 and SDS4

Positive Indicators

- Consistently presents a positive first impression of self and SDS
- Understands and effectively manages customer expectations
- Prepares for internal and external meetings (time, resources, papers etc)
- Responds positively to feedback from others e.g. communication style, format and content of communications
- Can present information/ideas in a user friendly fashion meeting the needs of individual customers and groups
- Demonstrates ability to listen to and **hear** the messages of others
- Deals effectively with personal and others' emotions in difficult situations

Negative Indicators

- Uses jargon and complex terminology regardless of audience
- Lacks confidence in making effective use of technology
- Goes into unnecessary detail and easily loses the attention of others
- Fails to diagnose customer needs – applies a one size fits all approach to their service delivery/job role

8. Personal Management

Definition

Quality (service delivery, policy and procedures, systems)

Planning and Organisation (workloads, tasks, resources)

Integrity (demonstrate open, honest and ethical behaviour in all dealings with customers, clients, colleagues, suppliers, partners and government).

Self-development (commitment to continuous personal development and new ways of learning)

Drive for results (commitment and contribution to continuous improvement and to achieving/exceeding targets)

SDS5, SDS6 SDS7

Positive Indicators

- Is clear about work objectives and priorities, providing clear direction and leadership
- Maintains consistency in behaviour and standards and is aware of impact of own behaviour on others
- Makes difficult or unpopular decisions if necessary to achieve outcomes
- Is open and responsive to constructive feedback on performance
- Is aware of own capabilities, authority and resources
- Seeks the support of others when needed
- Accepts responsibility for own work, actions and mistakes
- Identifies own development needs and ways of addressing these
- Displays confidence, demonstrating energy and commitment, in dealing with other people
- Remains focused and motivated in the face of set backs
- Monitors tasks and projects for quality, results and deadlines
- Planning, organisation and recording ensures efficient handover of tasks/workloads to others in times of absence/leave etc
- Makes others aware of the costs of non-compliance

Negative Indicators

- Difficulty managing time and priorities
- Planning of own work and that of the team doesn't take account of wider plans and objectives
- Defensive when receiving feedback
- Lacks insight into own personal strengths and development needs
- Is inconsistent in words and actions
- Apportions blame rather than leading a collective response to solving problems or rectifying mistakes
- Doesn't share learning gained from past failings/mistakes to help others make informed and positive decisions
- Under pressure will ignore personal values and beliefs rather than challenge others

SDS1, SDS2, SDS3 and SDS4

Positive Indicators

- Is clear about work objectives and priorities

Negative Indicators

- Difficulty managing time and priorities

Continues overleaf

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is aware of impact of own behaviour on others• Is open and responsive to constructive feedback on performance• Is aware of own capabilities, authority and resources• Seeks the support of others when needed• Accepts responsibility for own work, actions and mistakes• Identifies own development needs and seeks out ways of addressing these• Is confident and enthusiastic in dealings with other people• Remains focused and motivated in the face of set backs• Reflects on tasks and work activities to ensure continuous improvement• Organisation and recording of work ensures efficient handover of tasks/workloads in times of absence/leave etc• Complies with policy and procedure, systems requirements etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning of own work doesn't take account of managers' direction and leadership• Defensive when receiving feedback• Lacks insight into own personal strengths and development needs• Is inconsistent in words and actions• Apportions blame rather than contributing to solutions to problems/mistakes• Doesn't share learning gained from past failings/mistakes to help others make informed and positive decisions• Unable to uphold personal values and beliefs in the face of challenge from others
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