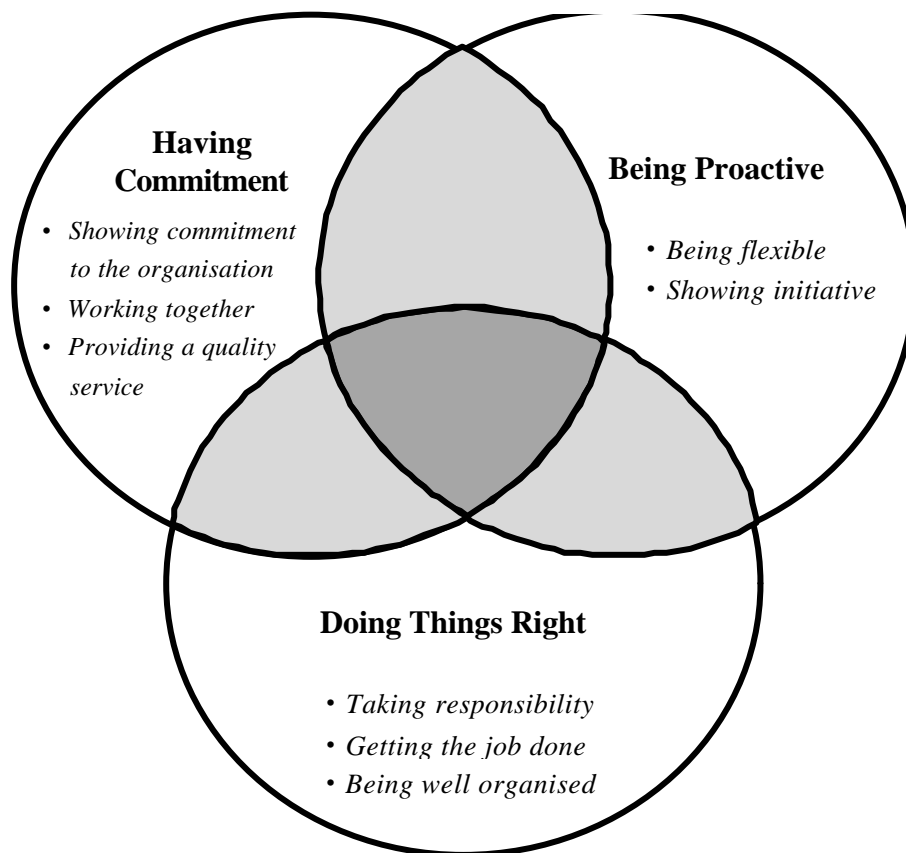


WORKING IN YORKSHIRE MET

*The personal qualities,
attitudes and behaviours
expected from staff*
**- A DEVELOPMENT GUIDE
FOR EMPLOYEES**



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INTRODUCTION
BY
BILL PAYNE, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Yorkshire Met exists to provide quality homes and help those in the greatest housing need in a variety of ways. As such we are committed to achieving success and growth, building a secure future for our tenants and our employees. We believe that this means taking nothing for granted, least of all our employees. Our strength is almost totally derived from the quality of the people who work for Yorkshire Met.

In this guide we have tried to set out those essential characteristics, values and behaviours that we value most in the people who work for us. These are the qualities that make us most effective and together they represent what we should all aim to achieve.

A group of Yorkshire Met employees has worked closely with Hay Management Consultants to identify these critical competency areas and then provide clear examples of what good and bad practice looks like. The general definitions are a combination of many years of research into what successful performance looks like in a wide range of jobs. However, and perhaps more important for us, this document is also personalised and draws on the collective experience and insight of our own employees.

You will find this guide helpful when planning for your own development. Your line manager will also place importance upon the content of this guide when looking at how you go about your work. Our managers will place a clear emphasis upon achievement of objectives and other more measurable aspects of performance.

Clearly some of the competencies described will be more relevant to your job than others. However, all of the competencies apply to some degree in all of our jobs.

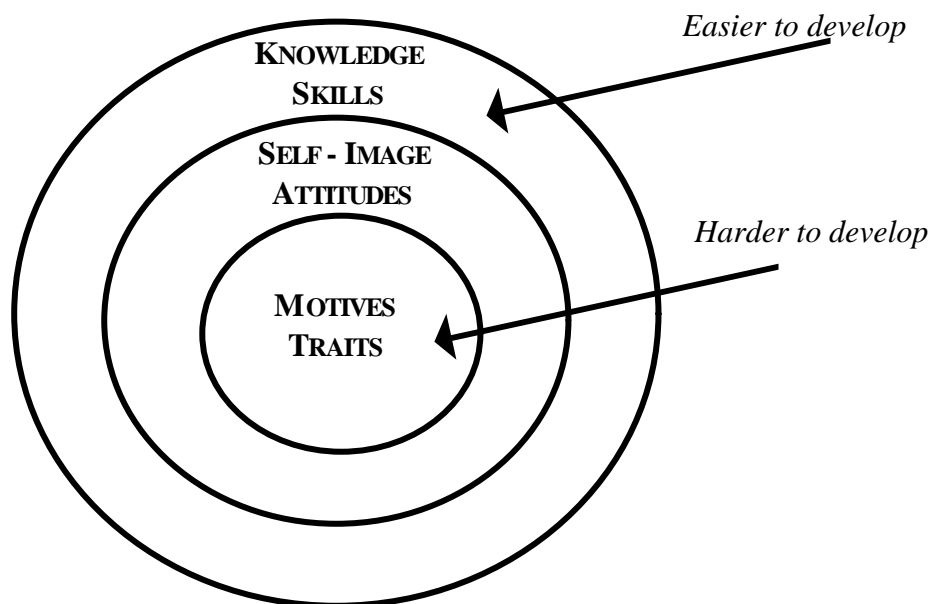
I hope that you will refer frequently to this guide as one key way of measuring how well you are doing at work .

BILL PAYNE

UNDERSTANDING COMPETENCIES

It is often things like motivation, team working and flexibility that really makes the difference in individual performance terms rather than the professional qualifications people possess or experience gained. This not to say that qualifications and experience are not important. It is more a case of ensuring we always look beyond these things too. These personal qualities are often called “competencies”.

There are different types or levels of competency. Some are easy to see and easy to develop, others less so. The ”onion diagram” below illustrates this. Skill and knowledge competencies are nearer the surface whilst deeper, core competencies are hidden beneath the surface. For too long some organisations have selected exclusively on the basis of these surface skills and knowledge (such as ‘10 years experience’, ‘a degree from a good university’ or ‘the right academic qualifications’).



Similarly, people are often trained and developed in only skills and knowledge areas. In reality, it is often as important to seek out the hidden competencies which get to the core of the job and provide suitable development opportunities.

As different levels in the “onion diagram”, you may have to ask different questions to know if there are areas of your own competence which could be improved, e.g:

QUESTION	DEVELOPMENT ISSUE
<i>“Do I have the experience or qualifications?”</i>	Knowledge
<i>“Do I know how?”</i>	Skill
<i>“Do I see the relevance to my role?”</i>	Attitudes
<i>“Do I see myself doing that?”</i>	Self Image
<i>“Do I think it’s not me, it’s not what I would usually do?”</i>	Traits
<i>“Do I get satisfaction from doing this?”</i>	Motives

When deciding which competencies to develop and how to go about developing them, use the “onion diagram” to recognise and understand your competency gaps and to identify which of these should be the focus of your development activities. If you understand this framework you will recognise that a substantial amount of personal effort is required to close a competency gap at the trait or motive level.

PLANNING YOUR OWN DEVELOPMENT

PRIORITISING

When setting and reviewing your personal work goals you may find it helpful to consider the following definitions of taking on new learning. Most people feel they have learned something when:

- *you know something you did not know earlier and can show it*
- *you are able to do something you were not able to do before*

If the goal you set for yourself is unlikely to lead to one of the outcomes above, you should reject it as a goal and find another development goal.

Your line manager and colleagues in the organisation also have copies of this document and are concerned about developing their own competence. However, this also means they are in a very good position to discuss your development priorities with you. It is often helpful to discuss your view informally and frequently, rather than save things up for discussion with your boss on a formal and very infrequent basis.

DEVELOPING A COMPETENCY

There are four stages in developing a competency:

1

RECOGNISE AND UNDERSTAND THE COMPETENCY

- *by reading the definition, why it is important and the positive/negative indicators for each competency*



2

SEE THE RELEVANCE TO YOUR JOB

- *by reflecting on how each competency matters to your overall performance or results delivery. Note that some will be more important than others depending upon what your job is. Also, talk to your boss and colleagues about how they see it*



3

SELECT POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

- *research points overwhelmingly to the fact that the most effective way of achieving overall objectives is to set very real specific goals. A good goals should be “SMART”*

- *Specific*
- *Measurable*
- *Attainable*
- *Realistic*
- *Timebound (by when?)*

Your goals can focus on situations at work or away from work. For example if “taking responsibility” is an area you wish to develop competence in you might set a **specific goal** such as:

“I will express my personal opinions more frequently with my colleagues even when I think they might disagree. I will make a point of bringing forward at least one agenda item to the team meeting each month. After three months I will review my progress with my boss to decide what I have learned and what I need to do next”.



REVIEW AND DECIDE ON NEXT STEPS

- *you should always build into your development planning time to reflect on the feedback you receive as a result of your actions. Think carefully about what you have learned and decide what you may need to do to reinforce this learning.*

METHOD OF LEARNING

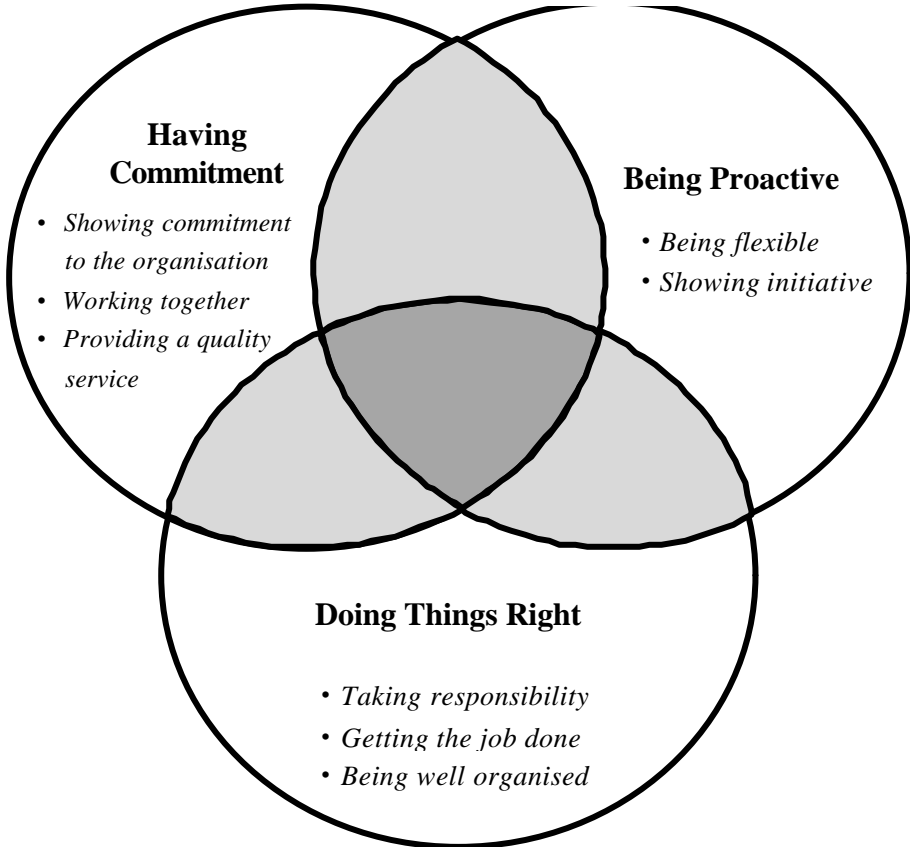
Remember that one of the best ways of competency development is by practising new approaches in a work situation. This does not mean that you should not consider other ways of learning. Typically these could include attending courses or seminars and reading relevant material. Often talking through possible development actions with a colleague or your boss will be helpful.

COMPETENCY DESCRIPTIONS

This is the major reference section of the guide. It provides a definition of each of the eight competencies identified by Yorkshire Met as important for all employees. The reason each of these eight competencies is important is explained and also, for further guidance, a summary of positive and negative examples is provided.

You can use these descriptions to make a personal assessment of where you are now and what you would like to do to improve upon your personal competency in one of the eight areas. Also, you and your boss should find the competency framework useful for discussing how you are doing at work.

YORKSHIRE MET COMPETENCIES:



HAVING COMMITMENT

- *Showing Commitment to the Organisation*
- *Working Together*
- *Providing a Quality Service*

SHOWING COMMITMENT TO THE ORGANISATION

Showing Commitment to the Organisation is about being willing to relate to and promote the goals and interests of the organisation, even if this means sometimes putting these ahead of personal preferences. This involves taking pride and satisfaction in the work of the organisation and doing what one can to enhance this.

It is important because everybody who works for Yorkshire Met must be capable of relating closely to the values and objectives of the organisation and be prepared to work within the standards that this entails. Yorkshire Met is as good as the people who work here and it is through your commitment and efforts that we can continue to build on a very strong reputation.

NEGATIVE INDICATORS

- *Is dismissive of the aims and objectives of Yorkshire Met*
- *Sometimes acts in a way which tarnishes the Yorkshire Met image*
- *Works to a personal agenda and acts in a way which undermines the aims and objectives of Yorkshire Met*
- *Is publicly critical of decisions taken by Yorkshire Met*
- *Is rarely prepared to put him/herself out to help meet Yorkshire Met priorities*

POSITIVE INDICATORS

- *Understands and supports the aims and objectives of Yorkshire Met*
- *Makes choices and sets priorities to fit with Yorkshire Met aims and objectives.*
- *Publicly expresses support for the aims of Yorkshire Met*
- *Works well within the framework of policies and procedures of Yorkshire Met*
- *Is concerned about the image of Yorkshire Met*
- *Acts professionally*
- *Will often put Yorkshire Met needs before personal preferences*
- *Stands by unpopular decisions which are good for Yorkshire Met in the longer term*

WORKING TOGETHER

Working together is about co-operating with other people rather than working separately or competitively. It means having the genuine desire to be a member of the team and takes steps to contribute to team effectiveness. Staff will be members of more than one team and although this is all about building teamwork, these relationships need to extend across all parts of the organisation.

It is important because Yorkshire Met consists of a number of small groups of staff who need to support each other and cover for each other if tenants, internal customers and other customers are going to get the best levels of service possible. There is also the need to share information with each other across the whole organisation and being prepared to do a little bit extra when needed to ensure Yorkshire Met can meet and improve upon its standards of service.

NEGATIVE INDICATORS

- Does just enough to get by*
- Hardly ever makes useful suggestions.*
- Ignores the views and feelings of others before acting*
- Puts own interest first*
- Helps out when asked but rarely volunteers*
- Is unco-operative*
- Doesn't always share information openly with others who need to know.*
- Doesn't consider how his/her work may impact on others.*

POSITIVE INDICATORS

- Does his or her share*
- Contributes useful suggestions*
- Understands the needs and feelings of others and will take these into account before acting.*
- Helps create a friendly climate of good morale and co-operation*
- Volunteers to help colleagues under pressure*
- Supports team decisions*
- Shows an interest in the work of others*
- Encourages others when times are tough*
- Publicly credits others who have done well*
- Shares information openly with those who need it.*
- Understands how departments, people and work relationships fit together in the organisation.*

- *Uses this understanding to respond appropriately in different situations.*

PROVIDING A QUALITY SERVICE

Providing a Quality Service is about having a desire to help or serve customers. Indeed it goes beyond this, focusing one's efforts on finding out the needs of people you deal with.

It is important because everybody at Yorkshire Met has customers, whether these are tenants, partner agencies, or colleagues within the organisation. It is only possible to achieve the aims and objectives of Yorkshire Met if we are responsive to the needs of others and constantly look at how we can improve the service we provide.

NEGATIVE INDICATORS

- *Is defensive with customers*
- *Doesn't always keep the customer informed of progress*
- *Has favourites amongst customers and acts inconsistently*
- *Sometimes responds flippantly to customer requests*
- *Doesn't always listen to what others are saying*
- *Can be blunt or dismissive with tenants or colleagues.*

POSITIVE INDICATORS

- *Asks regularly for feedback from others*
- *Uses feedback from others positively*
- *Treats everybody fairly and objectively*
- *Gives a friendly, considerate service*
- *Responds positively when a complaint is received*
- *Reacts to requests for help in a positive, professional way*
- *Constantly looks for ways to improve service levels*
- *Keeps people up to date with progress*
- *Can put him or herself in the other persons shoes*
- *Appreciates the views of others*
- *Makes time to listen to tenants and colleagues*
- *Explains carefully and sensitively when it is necessary to turn down a request from*

others

BEING PROACTIVE

- *Being Flexible*
- *Showing Initiative*

BEING FLEXIBLE

Being Flexible is about adapting to, and working within a variety of situations. It involves changing and adapting one's approach to new or changing demands. It also involves the ability to work successfully with different individuals and groups, understanding their perspectives and adapting one's approach accordingly.

It is important because Yorkshire Met works within an ever-changing environment. The nature and flow of work requirements is often hard to predict. People who work here need to be able to respond flexibly to the changing demands of all customers. This may involve accepting and working with changes in the day-to-day work of Yorkshire Met, or it may mean responding positively and flexibly to a specific deadline or target.

NEGATIVE INDICATORS

- *Is reluctant to change approaches or ways of working to meet changing needs*
- *Says "that's the way we've always done it"*
- *Says "it's not my job"*
- *Always sticks to set hours*
- *Regards new initiatives or changes in working practice as an inconvenience*

POSITIVE INDICATORS

- *Changes approaches and ways of working to meet the new or different needs of customers, without necessarily being asked first*
- *Is prepared to take on work outside the regular content of the role*
- *Applies procedures and guidelines flexibly*
- *Is prepared to "drop everything" to respond to high-priority deadlines*
- *Covers for others at short notice*
- *Will occasionally put in extra hours without prompting to ensure the job gets done*
- *Seems to be able to keep on top of lots of things at once*

- *Participates willingly in new initiatives.*

SHOWING INITIATIVE

Showing Initiative is about identifying and taking opportunities to act in order to achieve progress, meet needs or solve problems. It involves developing and implementing creative solutions to deal with issues, including those which are likely to arise in the future. It means having an awareness of how new approaches can sometimes deliver significant benefits to the organisation.

It is important because people at Yorkshire Met need to exercise initiative in order to create an environment where everyone strives to find new ways of meeting the needs of tenants and communities - ensuring that Yorkshire Met is truly “more than just a landlord”. Initiative drives the improvement of service standards and ensures the best prospects of delivering more with limited resources.

NEGATIVE INDICATORS

- *Finds obstacles rather than solutions when new issues arise*
- *Always works strictly to procedure and precedent.*
- *Is constantly surprised by new problems or opportunities*
- *Has a “one size fits all” approach to issues which arise*
- *Is reluctant to embrace change*
- *Passes problems to others, often without suggestions to overcome them*
- *Might say “but we have always done it like this”*

POSITIVE INDICATORS

- *Develops creative solutions to problems and issues*
- *Is not unnecessarily constrained by procedure or precedent*
- *Thinks ahead and acts to pre-empt problems*
- *Adapts own work approach to deal effectively with issues which arise*
- *Looks outside as well as inside the organisation for better ways of doing things*
- *Offers up lots of ideas for consideration*
- *Asks “how can I make this better”*

DOING THINGS RIGHT

- *Taking Responsibility*
- *Getting the job done*
- *Being well organised*

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

Taking Responsibility is about having, and demonstrating, a genuine desire to accept personal responsibility for one's own actions and those of the team. It includes contributing to the best of one's ability to ensuring the organisation is successful and acting in a professional way with colleagues and all external contacts.

It is important because the success of Yorkshire Met is entirely dependent on the contribution made by every member of staff. In a relatively tightly resourced organisation with ever increasing demands, taking responsibility is essential. At times, tenants and other external customers need and expect an authoritative response promptly. People should be prepared to take decisions within their experience and training.

NEGATIVE INDICATORS

- *Melts into the background at meetings or in formal discussions*
- *Comes across as hesitant and uncertain*
- *Does things when asked but rarely volunteers*
- *Often refers decisions to others when this is not necessary*
- *Generally expresses concerns and/or a negative attitude towards change*
- *Finds excuses to avoid taking responsibility*
- *Blames others, often says "it's not my fault".*

POSITIVE INDICATORS

- *Presents him or herself strongly and is regarded as capable by others*
- *Will speak up politely and with authority even if own view conflicts with that of others*
- *Coaches and supports others to fulfil their potential*
- *Welcomes challenging assignments*
- *Seeks out ways of setting higher standards of personal or team performance*
- *Provides opportunities for others to take responsibility and trusts them to do the job*
- *Accepts responsibility for decisions taken.*
- *Doesn't blame others when things go wrong, looks for ways to put things right.*

GETTING THE JOB DONE

Getting the job done is about taking pride and satisfaction in working well - for getting the job done and getting it done properly. It involves setting, achieving and surpassing personal standards of achievement, as well as meeting and exceeding established performance standards.

It is important because this sense of purpose is what drives people in Yorkshire Met to deliver excellent and improving standards of service; to develop and apply best practice; and to achieve demanding objectives and deadlines. These may arise from day-to-day work or from new and unexpected demands.

NEGATIVE INDICATORS

- *Shows little concern for doing the job well*
- *Does the minimum that can be got away with*
- *Focuses on reasons why things cannot be achieved*
- *Often misses deadlines*
- *Work can sometimes be a little slipshod or inconsistent*
- *Settles for “near enough” in quality terms*

POSITIVE INDICATORS

- *Delivers on time and to high standards*
- *Responds positively to goals and targets set by others*
- *Focuses on achieving priority tasks even when this interferes with day-to-day work*
- *Expresses enthusiasm for what needs to be done*
- *Mucks in*
- *Says “we just got on and did it”*
- *Does not wait to be asked*
- *Strives to create new standards of personal performance*
- *Challenges others if their response is unhelpful*

BEING WELL ORGANISED

Being well organised is about creating an organised working environment where roles are clear, systems well-ordered and policies and procedures adhered to. It involves demonstrating an interest in accuracy and strong attention to detail. It also means acting consistently.

It is important because Yorkshire Met needs to be an efficient and smooth-running organisation which delivers consistent standards of service to all customers with the minimum of mistakes. It is also important in ensuring that all activities comply fully with external regulations and internal policies and procedures.

NEGATIVE INDICATORS

- *Does not check own work or that of others for quality or accuracy.*
- *Shows little concern for creating a well-ordered working environment*
- *Presents things in a confusing or muddled way*
- *Doesn't always think through options before acting*

POSITIVE INDICATORS

- *Monitors quality and accuracy of own work and that of others*
- *Applies procedures consistently*
- *Is clear and concise*
- *Plans approach carefully*
- *Initiates action to correct problems*
- *Involves other people who need to know and explains how any changes can help them*
- *Knows why he/she needs to do certain things in a certain way, or finds out*
- *Acts to reduce or eliminate potential problems*
- *Deals with the most important things first.*
- *Is a good "self-manager" in terms of both time management and self-development.*