

Core Competency Statement

In line with our Statement of Ethical Practice, Mercy UK promotes the continual, personal and professional development of our employees and we are committed to a core competency statement, ensuring employees are educated, equipped and empowered to represent Mercy UK's core values, our ethos and our statement of faith.

Benefits of a Core-Competency Statement

A competence represents a skill, knowledge or behaviour required to perform effectively in a given job, role or situation. Competences provide a useful tool for everyone:

Team Members:

- Know what is expected in their role;
- Are recognised for the skills, knowledge and behaviours that are vital to every role;
- Have a tool for discussing how to improve in their current job, or how to improve or upskill towards career development within Mercy UK;
- Can identify and adapt their skills and behaviours when moving into a new role.

Managers:

- Have clear, fair and unbiased statements to use when discussing performance, which also help in setting job objectives for their team members;
- Have a common language to use when giving employees feedback on their performance;
- Can identify individual learning or development needs, as well as resources, meaning they can better structure employees' development and training; and
- Have a tool to help define career paths, provide support for planning how to fill vacant jobs and help people move to different roles.

Mercy UK, as employers:

- Can target resources for staff learning and development;
- Can be confident that we will be recruiting, developing and promoting the right people, who have the core skills and qualities we need to meet our mission;
- Can contribute to and help to shape the culture of our charity; and
- Can make sure we are making the most of, and cultivating, team members' abilities and contributions.

Mercy UK's Core Competency Statement applies to all employees. We ask employees to remain committed to meeting the competency requirements of five key areas of practice:

1. Core Qualities
2. Relational Communication
3. Knowledge and Skills Base
4. Reflective Practice
5. Accountability

1. Core Qualities of a Mercy UK Employee:

At Mercy UK, we are committed to becoming an organisation where team members feel supported, valued and challenged. As an agile and fast-moving team, we seek to give our very best in attitude and activity in seeing hope restored and lives transformed.

We each contribute to the culture in which we wish to live and work and, to this end, we ask our teams to actively cultivate the following core qualities and in doing so, protect and promote the Christian values of Mercy UK in their personal, private and public lives:

- **Positivity** - Choosing to look for the positive in a situation, turning challenge into opportunity, guarding the wellbeing of our colleagues, the atmosphere and our working environment
- **Honour** - Choosing to respect, show value, build healthy relationships and encourage one another with dignity and esteem

- **Growth Potential** - Choosing to advance and pursue new growth in creativity, professionalism, spirituality, emotional maturity, excellence, personal development and communication.
- **Follow Through** - Choosing to steward our responsibility and owning the influence of our responsibility in affecting the bigger picture; being accountable and seeing things through to completion
- **Alignment** - Choosing to position ourselves in agreement with managerial or leadership decisions, regardless of our own personal preference and agenda, and seeking to understand decisions so that they may be upheld with a sense of conviction.
- **Resilience** - Choosing to address challenges and hindrances, to dig deep, push through, keep going and move past any present circumstances, committing to seek a 'here and now' sense of direction and purpose in the outworking of your relationship with God.
- **Integrity** - Choosing to be consistent, authentic, honest and trustworthy with ourselves and with one another, creating an atmosphere of authenticity and safety
- **Discipline** - Choosing to exercise self-discipline towards positive emotional, mental and spiritual health as well as personal productivity; actioning what is required regardless of personal mood.
- **Gratitude** - Choosing to be thankful in all circumstances, sharing breakthroughs and positive updates to the teams and contributing to an atmosphere of joy and momentum.
- **Faith** - Choosing to trust and remain confident in God's character, nature and faithfulness and committing to ongoing fellowship with the Godhead and His Church

2. Relational Communication Competencies:

Relational communication is a style of communication that focusses primarily on building and protecting rapport and relational connection. At Mercy UK, we ask all employees to engage in a relational communication style. In particular:

- To attend and be empathic to an individual's beliefs and to be non-judgmental when these beliefs, theologies or practices differ from their own

- To offer respect, acceptance and be non-judgmental of an individual's experiences, perceptions or beliefs, including those to which the employee may have a negative response
- To explore with curiosity, respect and sensitivity to trauma, an individual's concerns or challenges, especially where these are relevant to wellbeing and mental health.
- To be reflective and not make assumptions by always seeking to understand the perspective and experience of the individual before giving a response.
- To be aware of ethical requirements including safeguarding obligations, the vulnerability of the individual and avoidance of spiritually or religiously coercive language

3. Knowledge & Skills Base

It is every team member's responsibility to demonstrate competence of knowledge and skills against the person specification and requirements of their role. Providing evidence of knowledge and skills, or how often skills or behaviours are shown is vital in measuring competence and targeting resources and training.

This area should be reviewed regularly between individual team members and their manager, in particular:

- To evidence training and qualifications received, ensuring personnel records are kept up to date.
- To be familiar with the requirements of the role and to agree on training and resources that support the fulfillment of these responsibilities.
- To be willing to undergo personal and professional development.
- To reflect on personal limitations and to engage in discussions relating to the competence of the team member's knowledge and skills base.
- To have an awareness of any limitations of your own experience, training or of the parameters of your role and carefully assess when to defer to a more appropriate post holder.
- To be diligent in documenting in case notes the rationale for, and outcome of, exploring mental, emotional, and spiritual issues. This includes documenting when spiritual, emotional support or behavioural interventions have been utilised.

4. Reflective Practice:

Reflective practice is the ability to reflect on one's actions so as to engage in a process of continuous learning. In particular:

- To have the ability to recognise issues of difference and diversity (including when they share the same faith tradition/background) and practice in a non-discriminatory manner.
- To recognise that having a personal faith is not necessarily sufficient on its own to work competently with religious/spiritual material. Team members must have the ability to evaluate whether they need to seek further training, support or healing in order to work proficiently in this area.
- To have an understanding and awareness of the tensions that may arise (especially within the religious community and/or pastoral and counseling settings) between different helping roles. Team members must demonstrate that they are able to reflect on and manage the ethical complexities and relational implications of a dual relationship. This includes having the ability to manage the dual relationship, seek accountability, report arising conflicts of interest and maintain appropriate boundaries related to their role.
- To be aware of the ethical importance of staying within their level of competence when working with religious/spiritual issues. In addition, as with all interventions, team members must have the ability to carefully and ethically evaluate the risks/potential harm as well as the benefits to an individual when making use of religious/spiritual interventions and only proceed if:
 - a) the individual gives specific informed consent, and
 - b) the intervention is considered by both parties to be of therapeutic value
- To have an ability to reflect on how one's own history, background, assumptions, values and/or religious/spiritual faith or issues might influence and/or impact the response to an individual and to pay attention to any potential relational dynamics/transference and countertransference issues that arise.

5. Accountability

Accountability is the acceptance of responsibility for one's own actions. It implies a willingness to be transparent, allowing others to observe and evaluate one's performance. For team members engaged in activities that hold a professional title and / or require membership of a regulated governing body, accountability will also include clinical supervision as well as, like all team members, accountability within their working relationship with their line manager.

In particular:

- Compassion role team members must be aware of the importance of bringing all of their support services or therapeutic work to supervision / one:ones, including how (or whether) they have addressed any presenting needs or religious/spiritual issues. This is important in order to receive feedback on the effectiveness of their work and to integrate suggestions and learning into their practice.
- To explore the impact of work with individuals or interoffice dynamics on one's own beliefs/practice.
- To engage in case reviews, audits, investigations or analysis of critical incidences in order to improve our services and one's own response and competency
- To promptly, and concisely, document any occurrences significant to the health, safety and wellbeing of another including critical incidences, interventions or support given within a therapeutic or people-helping context including, where appropriate, the reasoning for any action taken.