Leadership competencies for foundation trusts

How Hay Group’s Foundation Trust Framework can help existing and aspiring foundation trusts to foster leaders who deliver innovative, viable and high-quality services
Leadership competencies for foundation trusts

Facing new challenges

Running a foundation trust is fundamentally different from running a traditional NHS trust. FT status offers the freedom to set your own priorities and standards as well as manage your own finances.

With more freedom comes more responsibility. Senior leaders have to work in a very different way: the demand for high-quality care remains, but in addition a focus on commercial management, performance and competition is required. To be successful, both clinical and non-clinical leaders must develop a new set of skills and behaviours. These include:

- being more focused on outcomes, moving beyond targets to what individual patients need
- being entrepreneurial and business focused, understanding how to deliver services to create surpluses
- managing finances to be viable over the long term, developing five-year strategic plans rather than looking just at the year ahead
- working corporately and in partnership – not in hierarchical, ‘top-down’ ways
- taking collective responsibility for the organisation working effectively rather than focusing on their own disciplines
- being more creative, innovative and independent
- engaging customers, members, partners and commissioners seamlessly
- creating a compelling story of what needs to be done and how to achieve it to motivate others.

Through our work with foundation trusts and our experience of developing leadership competencies, Hay Group has created the Foundation Trust Framework to support the development of senior leaders in both FTs and aspiring FTs. It brings together a range of competencies required for successful performance. It supports the development of leaders by demystifying how they need to lead and behave and by describing how people go about achieving their objectives.

Trusts can use the framework to underpin how they develop outstanding leaders. They can use it alongside processes that guide talent management and succession planning, training and development, performance management and recruitment.

The Foundation Trust Framework

The framework informs the leadership strategy at board level by clarifying the competencies that trusts need in order to be efficient, effective and innovative.

It identifies 11 key competencies of outstanding leaders, grouped into four clusters: people, enthusiasm, impact and thinking ahead. Each competency is then broken down into its associated behaviours, with some examples listed in the box opposite. To meet the challenges ahead, leaders will need to focus on each of these areas.

We developed the framework, in consultation with both clinical and non-clinical leaders. It looks at the elements and behaviours needed to achieve high performance in each competency, as well as pinpointing counterproductive behaviours that stifle progress.

Certain roles require particular competencies more than others. Each individual may not need to demonstrate the highest level of each competency but leadership teams should have all the behaviours between them.
People

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<tr>
<th>People</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self management and control</td>
<td>Understanding and managing ones’ emotions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpersonal understanding</td>
<td>Understanding others’ behaviour and organisational culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop self and others</td>
<td>Investing time and resources in developing self and others’ capability</td>
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<td>Lead and inspire</td>
<td>Motivating others and developing teams to deliver the trust’s objectives</td>
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Enthusiasm

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<tr>
<td>Passion for customers</td>
<td>Focusing on understanding customer needs and exceeding their expectations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategic thinking</td>
<td>Making sense of complex and disparate ideas and innovating</td>
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<tr>
<td>Determination</td>
<td>Being confident in one’s own abilities and strengths and taking on challenges</td>
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Thinking ahead

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<tr>
<td>Commercial focus</td>
<td>Investigating and gathering information in order to make sound commercial decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial drive</td>
<td>Being business focused with a desire to constantly improve performance</td>
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Impact

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<td>Partnership working</td>
<td>Working effectively with others inside and outside the trust to achieve the best outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convince and persuade</td>
<td>Impacting others’ behaviour and mindsets to achieve the trust’s objectives</td>
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How the framework can help

The Foundation Trust Framework builds on and moves beyond existing frameworks to introduce competencies that take into account the changing nature of leadership roles in foundation trusts. It can be combined with other frameworks to make something bespoke to the needs of individual organisations and can integrate with other HR processes as part of a wider strategy.

Hay Group has developed a 360 degree feedback tool to measure the various competencies and identify areas of strength and weakness. It can provide valuable qualitative and quantitative data on leaders at all levels of the organisation, leadership teams and their combined development needs. This can be used by organisations alone or in consultation with Hay Group as part of a broader programme of leadership and organisational development.

Identifying the areas of strengths and weaknesses among senior leaders is vital for informing strategies on talent management and succession planning; leadership development; performance management; training; recruitment; selection and induction.

It can also be a useful diagnostic tool when recruiting senior staff from outside the NHS, offering a common language to assess the competencies of the individual against the job they are required to do.

As well as identifying areas that need attention, it can be used subsequently to check that progress is being made, informing strategy for further assessment and development of both individuals and teams across the trust as a whole.
Benefits of working with Hay Group

- Hay Group is a trusted advisor and partner to over 100 health trusts across the UK and our board development work has helped guide NHS trusts to successfully achieve FT status.
- Hay Group’s Foundation Trust Framework has been designed and tested in consultation with both clinical and non-clinical leaders and has been benchmarked against best practice in other organisations.
- We are experts on leadership development and can help integrate the new Foundation Trust Framework with existing HR processes and strategies.
- Many of our consultants have worked in the NHS – we know and understand the structural and cultural issues.
- As an independent advisor, we bring objectivity along with a wider understanding of leadership practice in other industries.

About Hay Group

Hay Group works with leaders to transform strategy into reality. We develop talent, organise people to be more effective and motivate them to perform at their best. Our focus is on making change happen and helping people and organisations realise their potential.

Our clients are from the private, public and not-for-profit sectors, and represent diverse business challenges. For over 60 years, we have been renowned for the quality of our research and the intellectual rigour of our work. We give our clients breakthrough perspectives on their organisation, and we do it in a way which delivers results and real value.

Contact information

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