

## **COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES OF HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCIES**

### **INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS A COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK?**

A competency framework is a set of competencies or behaviours which an individual might be expected to demonstrate in carrying out their role.

A competency framework is designed to sit alongside and enhance, not replace, other documentation relating to a particular role within an organisation i.e. job descriptions typically consist of areas of responsibility and key tasks. Person specifications set out the qualifications, skills and experience required for a post.

However, because most organisations which appoint voluntary non-paid Management Committee members, do not use job descriptions or person specifications, it is even more important for a standard list of 'competencies' to be developed and used by the organisation when selecting committee members.

### **COMMITTEE MANAGEMENT AND HIAS**

The role and responsibilities of an HIA committee can vary according to the functions, needs and requirements of the HIA, the structure of its managing organisation and its own constitution. Typically, there are two main types of HIA committee – Management Committees and Advisory Boards/Committees. In general terms, A management committee or board of trustees will direct an independent agency. In agencies that are managed by larger organisations, the parent organisation holds formal management responsibilities, but a micro-level advisory committee makes certain that the service offers local relevance and partnerships.

Management Committees have:

- £ Responsibility for implementing strategic framework
- £ Complete accountability for the running of the service
- £ Legal Duties
- £ Responsibility for implementing policies, procedures and practices
- £ Legal, financial and monitoring obligations

Advisory Committees should:

- £ Advise on the day to day running of the service
- £ Act as an advisory connection between the managing body, the staff and local interested individuals and parties
- £ Offer practical assistance and information to all relevant bodies
- £ Offer expertise and experience to other management elements
- £ Provide an imperative local voice and be responsive to local needs

The committee should ideally consist of representatives from partner organisations and service users. This is particularly important when considering Best Value, as the Committee can be a method of consulting and involving users of the service. The role of the committee is also to help to build effective joint working arrangements with partner organisations.

The committee should:

- £ · Advise the HIA on local issues
- £ · Advise on running the HIA
- £ · Assist in measuring the effectiveness of the HIA
- £ · Provide a sounding board for following through the HIAs performance plan.
- £ · Offer expertise on how to raise the profile of the HIA
- £ · Help share and develop good practice
- £ · Support staff
- £ · Help to influence partner policies where they adversely affect target client groups

This HIA Committee Framework also contains best practice guidance for the governance of HIAs. All HIAs should consider every aspect of the Framework and take appropriate actions in order to achieve the competencies. Not all of the recommendations will apply to all HIAs, as agencies do vary considerably in their size, composition and functions.

HIAs are also advised to adopt constitutions, standing orders and other documentation which support effective governance.

## HOW TO USE THIS FRAMEWORK

This Framework has been developed by Foundations and is based on a number of different sources.

The Framework consists of generic behaviours which might be expected of members of an HIA's Management Committee. Explanatory best practice notes have been included against a number of competencies.

This framework should be adapted to the needs of the organisation as it develops over time.

There are a number of principles which Management Committees should follow. An interpretation of each principle is given below. Good governance is based on a diverse, balanced and effective committee that leads and controls the agency. The principles underpinning good governance are:

**Standards** The committee operates according to high ethical standards

**Accountability** There is real accountability to, and involvement of, all the HIA's stakeholders, including its clients

**Openness** Full disclosure of governance matters should be made and a spirit of openness should prevail throughout the organisation

**Equality** All aspects of the HIA's governance are operated with fairness and equality of opportunity

**Review** Formal and open processes are in place for the periodic review of the HIAs performance

**Clarity** The roles and responsibilities of all the organisation's officers, committee members and paid staff are clear

**Control** Effective systems exist for internal delegation, audit and control

**Information** The committee receives adequate and timely reports and advice in order to inform its decisions

**Structures** Effective staffing and committee structures exist in order to support the HIA

**Audit** Effective and proper relationships exist between the organisation and its external auditors and regulators

Framework Elements	Competencies of Committee Members	Good Practice Notes
<p><b>A. Committee Principles and Constitution</b></p>		
<p><b>General Principles</b></p> <p>The purpose of the Management Committee is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ to direct an organisation's affairs and;</li> <li>§ to determine strategic direction and policies.</li> </ul> <p>Implementation (management) should be delegated to the organisation's staff</p> <p>All Management Committee members share responsibility for its decisions. They should act only in the interests of the organisation and not on behalf of any constituency or interest group.</p> <p>The committee should have at least 7 members and a maximum of 12. The chair of the Management Committee should not be a co-opted HIA officer and HIA officers co-opted as Management Committee members should be in a clear minority</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>J Fully understands the function of the HIA and the division of roles and responsibilities between management and committee</li> <li>J Promotes a culture of accountability and responsibility at committee level and within the HIA itself</li> <li>J Is able to separate private or personal interest from the work of the committee, recognises and consistently declares 'conflicts of interest' whenever necessary</li> <li>J Assists with the effective scrutiny of budgets and accounts and effectively utilises the techniques of risk management in order to identify any reasonable risks to the HIA</li> </ul>	<p>Each committee member should be provided with a letter specifying a member's responsibilities and obligations. The member should sign a copy to indicate their agreement. The obligations included should be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£ Uphold the values and objectives of the HIA;</li> <li>£ Uphold the HIAs policies, including those for equal opportunities;</li> <li>£ Share responsibility for, and contribute to the committee's decision;</li> <li>£ Prepare for, and attend meetings, training sessions and other events;</li> <li>£ Represent the HIA on occasion;</li> <li>£ Declare any relevant interests;</li> <li>£ Respect the confidentiality of information; and</li> <li>£ Uphold the principles of good governance</li> </ul>

Framework Elements	Competencies of Committee Members	Good Practice Notes
<b>B. Governance</b>		
<p>The committee takes a lead on agreeing values, mission and strategic objectives.</p> <p>(Usually there will be a philanthropic ethos, but some HIAs will be more commercially driven).</p> <p>The committee establishes policies and plans to achieve the HIAs strategic objectives</p> <p>(The Committee must ensure that the HIAs strategic objectives are converted into achievable service delivery plans)</p> <p>Monitors the performance of the HIA</p> <p>Performance monitoring will generally be in relation to business plans, budgets, targets, benchmarks. controls, decisions and holding management to account)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>J · Demonstrates awareness of and commitment to, core values of the HIA</li> <li>J · Displays an understanding of, and ability to balance the needs of the HIA's stakeholders (including staff)</li> <li>J · Is conversant with developments within the HIA and affiliated sectors or is able to adequately represent the needs of client groups</li> <li>J · Is able to contribute to the conversion of strategic objectives into service delivery plans which can meet social results</li> <li>J · Ensures that policies and standards are set for all matters relevant to the HIA (i.e. human resources, Best Value, health and safety, financial control, risk management, managing diversity)</li> <li>J · Effectively holds management to account</li> <li>J · Encourages the accountability and financial propriety of the HIA along with the ability to commission and critically review external reports (i.e. financial, internal audit etc)</li> <li>J · Makes an effort to understand the chosen monitoring systems used and encourages the provision of timely, accurate, relevant information and review processes</li> <li>J · Makes recommendations to improve deteriorating performance and to agree action plans</li> <li>J · Recognises the importance of equal opportunities and diversity issues in all the organisation's functions and aspects of performance monitoring</li> </ul>	<p>Experience of Treasury management is strongly recommended (collectively)</p> <p>Accounting policies must meet regulatory guidance and be lawful</p> <p>Internal audit must take place in order to ensure proper financial stewardship and probity</p>

Framework Elements	Competencies of Committee Members	Good Practice Notes
<b>C. Works together effectively as a Management Committee</b>		
1. Has the Right Structures in Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>J · Understands the different committee structures available and the chosen system of delegation and encourages the committee to consider alternative approaches to decision making wherever relevant</li> <li>J · Is able to relate all areas of scrutiny back to the Terms of Reference for the Committee</li> </ul>	There should be an appropriate number and duration of committee meetings to allow committee members to participate in an adequate review and discussion of an annual cycle of matters, standing items and policy issues
2. Fosters effective relationships and team processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>J · Encourages good relationships between the Chair and the HIA manager and ensures that an atmosphere of mutual respect and co-operation is fostered</li> <li>J · Continuously utilises planning, organisational skills and knowledge of committee functions in order to ensure that the Management Committee agenda always covers the appropriate governance issues</li> <li>J · Initiates relevant discussions, recommends appropriate levels of enquiry and contributes to the decisions needed by the HIA in an open manner</li> <li>J · Understands the different methods of communication and discussion that may be utilised by other committee members and adapts their own methods in order to achieve effective debate</li> <li>J · Encourages the review of the effectiveness of the Chair and assists with any necessary measures required in order to prevent the Chair from possessing excessive levels of power</li> </ul>	
3. Contributes added value to the work of the HIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>J · Distinguishes between issues of Governance and items that should be delegated for day to day management decisions</li> <li>J · Demonstrates the ability to contribute materially to the thinking and actions of the HIAs management team</li> <li>J · Supports innovative and creative methods of achieving the organisation's objectives</li> </ul>	Contributions of the committee should be reviewed collectively and individually

