



FACULTY OF GENERAL DENTAL PRACTICE (UK)
THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND

Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK)

Guidelines for Standards in the Development of Leadership and Management in the Dental Health Sector

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1. Introduction

This document provides suggested competencies and guidelines for the development of individuals who can provide leadership and management in the delivery of dental care. To achieve this, the document outlines a series of core competencies for dental healthcare leaders and managers. While the competencies are common to dentistry, they are equally applicable to the healthcare sector in general.

The document is intended for use by employing organisations, for example Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), and dentally qualified individuals to help develop standards of care within the health system. For PCTs, the document outlines areas of competence that prospective employers should ideally have for ensuring effective management of the dental care system. For dental personnel, the document provides an outline to help career development for individuals wishing to undertake greater leadership and management roles.

With the changes in dental care delivery arrangements, particularly the placing of the responsibilities of commissioning dental care with Primary Care Trusts, individuals who can demonstrate appropriate competencies may be contracted to provide such special interest services within the primary dental care environment. A dentist with a special interest (DwSI) contract is a relationship based on meeting local oral healthcare needs. The commissioning or appointment of a DwSI signifies that the individual contracted to undertake activities for the organisation has the appropriate competencies as identified. The competencies and guidance in this document have been developed, as far as possible, to reflect the suggested processes for the appointment of DwSIs in general.

2. Background

The publication of the NHS plan¹ saw the acknowledgement by the Department of Health of the need for improved leadership within the healthcare system. This view was echoed throughout the public sector reform programme. The document *Reforming our public services*² from the Office of Public Services Reform states that 'Public service reform requires support for and the development of excellent leaders capable of tackling poor management and inspiring ambitious performance. The Government needs to invest in high quality training and development to help fulfill the potential of all public servants, and in particular current and future leaders and managers'³.

Pleck and Wilson⁴ developed the themes within these documents and applied them to the healthcare system. They suggested that healthcare delivery arrangements should be viewed as a complex system and that individuals were 'needed at all levels to develop a more sophisticated view of the variation in complex systems'. It has also been increasingly acknowledged throughout the evolving healthcare system that greater leadership and management skills are required.

Batchelor⁵ reinforced this view, highlighting that to date, reliance upon good leaders and managers in dentistry has been left to chance. The development of the Career Pathway⁶ for primary care dental practitioners by the FGDP(UK) brought recognition of the importance of management to ensuring the highest standards within primary dental care by requiring practitioners to demonstrate leadership and management competencies.

2.1 Why do we need competencies in leadership and management?

Without good leadership and management a system is highly unlikely to be efficient or effective. Leadership and management are important as they affect everything that a provider does. This includes the quality of the care delivered, the support offered to other providers, and the overall success of the system.

Leadership and management are two different aspects of activities within a system which share the goal of ensuring that performance meets given standards. Leadership concerns itself with defining a clear direction for a system: specifying the aims of the organisation, devising the strategy for achieving the aims, and its implementation. Management is more concerned with making sure that the processes through which the system operates are adhered to; it uses formal arrangements to achieve goals, and organisational skills are particularly important.

The dental care delivery system has become increasingly complex. Not only is there a far greater range of treatment modalities and increasing legislation affecting care provision but also increased patient expectations. These developments increase the risks of adverse events occurring; ie. of failings within the system.

Dental care requires a number of trained individuals to work together: nurses, receptionists, technicians, hygienists and therapists as well as dentists. Factors affecting the quality of care include health and safety legislation, communication skills and the level of accountability.

The skills to help ensure that these aspects are dealt with include:

- The ability to manage teams, goals and strategies for the business side of dentistry, taking into account the increasing plurality of funding streams;
- Communication skills both within the care team and also with patients and commissioners;
- The need to be effective at negotiation and conflict resolution; and
- An understanding of risk management and its application to clinical governance.

These skills are found in good leaders and managers. They can be defined, taught and assessed. With the loss of the national General Dental Services contract and introduction of locally based commissioning of services through Primary Care Trusts, general dental practitioners will need to negotiate and manage their business to a far greater extent than previously. In order to prevent problems, individuals are needed who have the skills to help ensure that all care providers are aware of the changes and their implications, be it at an international, national or local level.

Following the creation of PCTs who have responsibility for commissioning dental care services, individuals will be required to advise not only the purchasers of care but also the providers. All parties need to understand the issues and complexities involved. Just as with the clinical domains, there is a requirement for individuals with a greater than normal level of expertise to help prevent and address issues arising from the development of a new system.

3. Competencies for leadership and management

The proposed competencies are grouped under three domains: change competencies; environment competencies; and self and business competencies.

For each of the three domains, a number of competencies have been identified. For change competencies, these are awareness, eg. the ability to anticipate operational problems; creativity, the ability to explore more viable ways of working; perceptiveness, an individual's ability to develop their own vision; and action management, which includes the ability to move projects forward.

The second domain covers the environment. Competencies identified here include organisational awareness, for example knowing who the key decision-makers are; teamwork, i.e. being able to bring people together and to get them working effectively; partnerships, and knowing when, where and how these can help; interpersonal relationships, for example managing group dynamics; and communication, including listening and reporting competencies.

The final group of competencies is called the self and business domain. These include ethics and values, for example ensuring activities are consistent with health and public sector values; self-awareness, i.e. working with others to help them meet common goals; adaptability, the willingness to accept change; self-belief, the competencies that relate to an individual's ability to stand up to challenge and question existing practices; financial, including demonstrating the ability to develop a business plan; and legal competencies, such as those concerning contractual issues.

Each of the domains is described in more detail below, along with a definition of the various competencies. For each of the major competencies, further supporting competencies are listed to define further how competency may be demonstrated. For each of the competencies identified, the level of competence will need to be established. This should be based on the three levels within any care organisation, namely practice, middle management and senior management.

In section 3.2 a function map is provided to show the relationship between the three domains, major and supporting competencies.

The basis for development should be centred around the needs of the organisation. For a DwSI, a potential employer should identify which of the competencies need to be demonstrated, and the level necessary to fulfil their requirements.

3.1 Major Competencies

A. Change competencies

A1 Awareness

Awareness or cognitive competencies cover the ability to solve operational problems and to recognise potential barriers. Managers should use their cognitive skills to ensure that a project progresses in a coordinated manner according to schedule. Managers should be skilled at recognising problems that affect the outcome of projects, and should encourage team members to do the same. They are able to anticipate negative consequences before they occur, and are able to counteract harmful effects. Mental agility and a focus on problem-solving are prerequisites. Managers are able to assess potential solutions to problems, and to rank them by weighing the risks and benefits, as well as the impact they may have on other areas.

Supporting competencies include:

- A1.1 analysing and reconciling the resource implications of a project
- A1.2 ability to anticipate operational problems
- A1.3 coordinating information from a variety of sources
- A1.4 ability to recognise, analyse and solve problems across projects
- A1.5 developing new ideas to solve problems and meet challenges.

A2 Creativity

Managers continually seek to identify new and better ways to accomplish objectives. To achieve this they should consider all options, paying regard to and having knowledge of the administrative framework, policies and practices that underlie their work in the dental sector. They should be able to appreciate how other team members can contribute to the development and delivery of care services. Managers should help to provide an environment that encourages challenging of the status quo, explores new, more viable ways of operating, and embraces originality and individual innovation. Managers should also recognise the importance of continuing professional development to help bring about new ways of working.

Supporting competencies include:

- A2.1 ability to develop own vision
- A2.2 ability to challenge current approaches to working arrangements to help achieve the most favourable outcomes
- A2.3 recognising and building creativity in team members
- A2.4 identifying barriers to more creative working arrangements
- A2.5 recognising opportunities for learning and development.

A3 Perceptiveness

Managers should have a sound understanding of both the vision of the organisation and strategic plans intended to bring the organisation into alignment with that vision. Managers should be able to self-assess their own activities for consistency with the vision, and to take action to bring them into alignment with the vision. Managers should serve as role models for other staff in communicating both the vision itself and the need to actively embrace it and work toward its achievement.

Supporting competencies include:

A3.1 being able to align the projects and the people in the unit with the overall direction of the organisation

A3.2 incorporating organisational change within the system

A3.3 ability to promote the benefits of, and provide positive examples of change

A3.4 identifying practical steps and timeframes for the implementation of change.

A4 Operational management

Managers should be able to ensure the successful delivery of programmes and services within their area of responsibility through project and human resource management skills. Managers should be able to recognise the strengths and limitations of their staff, and to use this knowledge when assigning projects and tasks to meet the operational needs of the organisation, while at the same time providing opportunities for development. Managers can plan financial and human resources, allocating resources at the outset, and modifying the distribution of resources in order to meet new or changing organisational needs, seeking additional resources if necessary. Managers actively maintain an in-depth understanding of the work their staff are doing, and monitor the relationship of that work to the larger strategic context of their organisation.

Supporting competencies include:

A4.1 establishing targets for quality and for productivity within the team

A4.2 moving projects forward to achieve effective and timely results

A4.3 identifying operational requirements for financial and human resources

A4.4 assigning and reallocating resources as required

A4.5 using technology in the implementation of a project where appropriate.

B Environmental competencies

B1 Organisational awareness

Managers should have a sound understanding of the structure of their organisation and the roles played by key individuals and linked organisations. They know the goals of their organisation well, and understand the relationship between the work of their unit and broader organisational issues. Managers should be able to recognise the key issues, individuals and decision points that relate to their areas of responsibility. They should establish and foster ongoing relationships with individuals throughout their organisation whose influence or areas of responsibility may have a bearing on the work of their unit.

Supporting competencies include:

B1.1 recognition of the stakeholders of projects in the organisation.

B1.2 identifying persuasive arguments for a project based on the needs of the organisation and stakeholders

B1.3 ability to establish working relationships with other groups within the organisation that would help to facilitate the progress of projects

B1.4 an understanding of the potential relevance of external organisations' activities.

B2 Teamwork

Managers should adopt a collaborative working relationship that places the needs of the organisation ahead of their own interests. They should be able to work effectively with colleagues both within and outside of their direct sphere of operations to achieve common goals and enhance the overall effectiveness of their organisation. When working with teams, managers recognise when it is necessary to intervene directly, and when it is best to step back and allow others to provide the input and direction. Managers build and lead effective teams that are composed of a diversity of talents and perspectives, and empower their more junior staff in a way that encourages co-operation and rewards initiative.

Supporting competencies include:

B2.1 building strong teams with complementary strengths

B2.2 ability to stimulate good working co-operation between teams and team members.

B2.3 recognising the importance of relationships with external organisations and building these relationships to achieve satisfactory outcomes

B2.4 recognising and giving praise to all contributors within the team.

B3 Partnerships

Managers should use their knowledge of an organisation to identify opportunities for partnerships. They recognise when the efficient delivery of care and services to both individuals and other organisations could benefit from the expertise, perspective or strategic position of an outside agency. Managers should work directly with partners in ways that promote good relations and the ongoing continuation of beneficial partnerships. They identify potential or real difficulties involving partners, and provide advice to their superiors on the future direction existing partnerships should take. Managers encourage their employees to adopt a co-operative attitude and an open mind towards both existing and potential partnerships.

Supporting competencies include:

B3.1 the ability to recognise how partnerships can help to improve outcomes

B3.2 ability to forge joint working relationships to develop common projects

B3.3 ability to recommend when changes to, or the termination of, partnerships are required.

B4 Interpersonal relations

Managers should understand the importance of their relationships with other workers within the organisation. They understand both the importance of positive interpersonal relationships to the productivity of the unit and the impact that they have on the well-being and satisfaction of other individuals. They should take responsibility for the working environments under their control, and be able to understand and manage effectively the group dynamics that may arise. Managers actively foster positive relationships among their staff, recognise potential conflicts and take action to reduce the potential damage that may arise. In dealing with individuals at all levels, managers demonstrate empathy and are deliberate in their efforts to understand the concerns of others.

Supporting competencies include:

B4.1 managing group dynamics and group situations within and across units

B4.2 giving credit or recognition for the contribution of others

B4.3 recognising, managing and handling difficult relationships.

B5 Communication

Managers are effective communicators. They are able to articulate in a concise and unambiguous manner. They also recognise the importance of listening skills and verbal and non-verbal cues to effective interpersonal relationships. The effective use of listening and communication skills allows managers to establish a crucial link in the flow of information within an organisation. They appreciate the role of technology in communication and, when appropriate, will encourage its use to facilitate communication with others.

Supporting competencies include:

B5.1 appreciating and using effective communication

B5.2 ability to listen to and take into account the concerns, ideas and views of all team members

B5.3 keeping key stakeholders informed of progress on relevant projects and acting on feedback where appropriate

B5.4 using technology as a means to communicate effectively

B5.5 listening effectively.

C Self and business competencies

C1 Ethics and values

Managers should be guided by sound ethical principles and values that are congruent with those of the health and public sector, and the organisation within which they work. Managers take responsibility for instilling and encouraging these values in their staff, and continually monitor the functioning and environment of their working environment to ensure that it is consistent with those values, taking action to bring projects and policies into alignment as necessary. Managers are aware of the importance of fairness and dignity in the treatment of their staff, and ensure that their human resource management practices are guided by these principles.

Supporting competencies include:

C1.1 using sound ethical practices in carrying out duties

C1.2 ensuring equity in staffing actions and developmental opportunities

C1.3 maintaining objective, fair and impartial human resource practices

C1.4 being aware of own values and their potential impact

C1.5 ensuring that activities are consistent with the organisation's values/mission statement

C1.6 valuing diversity within the team

C2 Self and team awareness

Managers should take pride in their ability to see the work of their organisation through to successful and timely completion. They welcome challenging goals, and persevere to overcome barriers to the successful completion of the goals. Managers recognise the diversity of personalities in staff and colleagues, and seek to understand and benefit from that diversity when managing their staff and working with others. Managers help their subordinates to identify and work towards goals that are specific, measurable, appropriate, timely and realistic, and offer sufficient challenge to encourage learning and career development.

Supporting competencies include:

C2.1 working with team members to help them set challenging but realistic goals

C2.2 recognising the impact that personalities play in achieving goals

C3.3 demonstrating insight and self-awareness.

C3 Adaptability

Managers need to be able to modify their interpersonal style as necessary to interact effectively with individuals in a broad range of contexts and at different levels. The complex and changing environment in which health managers operate requires them to recognize organisational changes that are relevant to the day-to-day activities. Managers' behaviour and willingness to accept change allow them to meet operational commitments while responding appropriately to changing priorities.

Supporting competencies include:

C3.1 ability to change priorities to meet new challenges in a changing environment

C3.2 maintaining operational effectiveness in an environment that contains ambiguity and uncertainty.

C4 Self-belief

Managers show belief in their own abilities, and willingly assume responsibility for their decisions and the performance of their organisation. This in turn fosters confidence in their staff and provides an important operational focal point of leadership for them. Managers are willing to take calculated risks and openly question traditional or outdated working practices. They encourage staff to challenge the status quo and provide alternative viewpoints on their own decisions.

Supporting competencies include:

C4.1 willingness to assume personal responsibility for the work of their organisation

C4.2 ability to challenge in a constructive manner the existing systems

C4.3 ability to seek alternative opinions to enhance understanding of situations, events or change

C4.4 supporting and defending the interests of their employees and team members as necessary and appropriate.

C5 Financial

Managers should be able to build and maintain a customer base. They can perform market analyses, recognise business opportunities and undertake patient or customer satisfaction surveys. These activities should foster an entrepreneurial spirit, and from data produced they should be able to develop and implement follow-up programs. Managers should have a clear understanding of financial practices that have an impact on the delivery of the service.

Supporting competencies include:

C5.1 understanding of the requirements for and ability to develop a business plan

C5.2 knowledge of the organisation's current financial performance

C5.3 monitoring budgets/financial performance effectively

C5.4 co-operating with external inspectors/auditors and able to initiate appropriate action in response to any findings

C5.5 demonstrating knowledge and understanding of potential funding sources.

C6 Legal

Managers need to be able to comprehend the legal framework underpinning the provision of care. They should be aware of contractual legislation, including any service terms and conditions that apply to the organisation. They need to have an understanding of corporate, clinical and business legislation that impacts on the functions of the organisation and the obligations of the key bodies operating within the healthcare sector.

Supporting competencies include:

C6.1 understanding of the legal obligations imposed on care providers

C6.2 ability to read and understand the common legal clauses in care

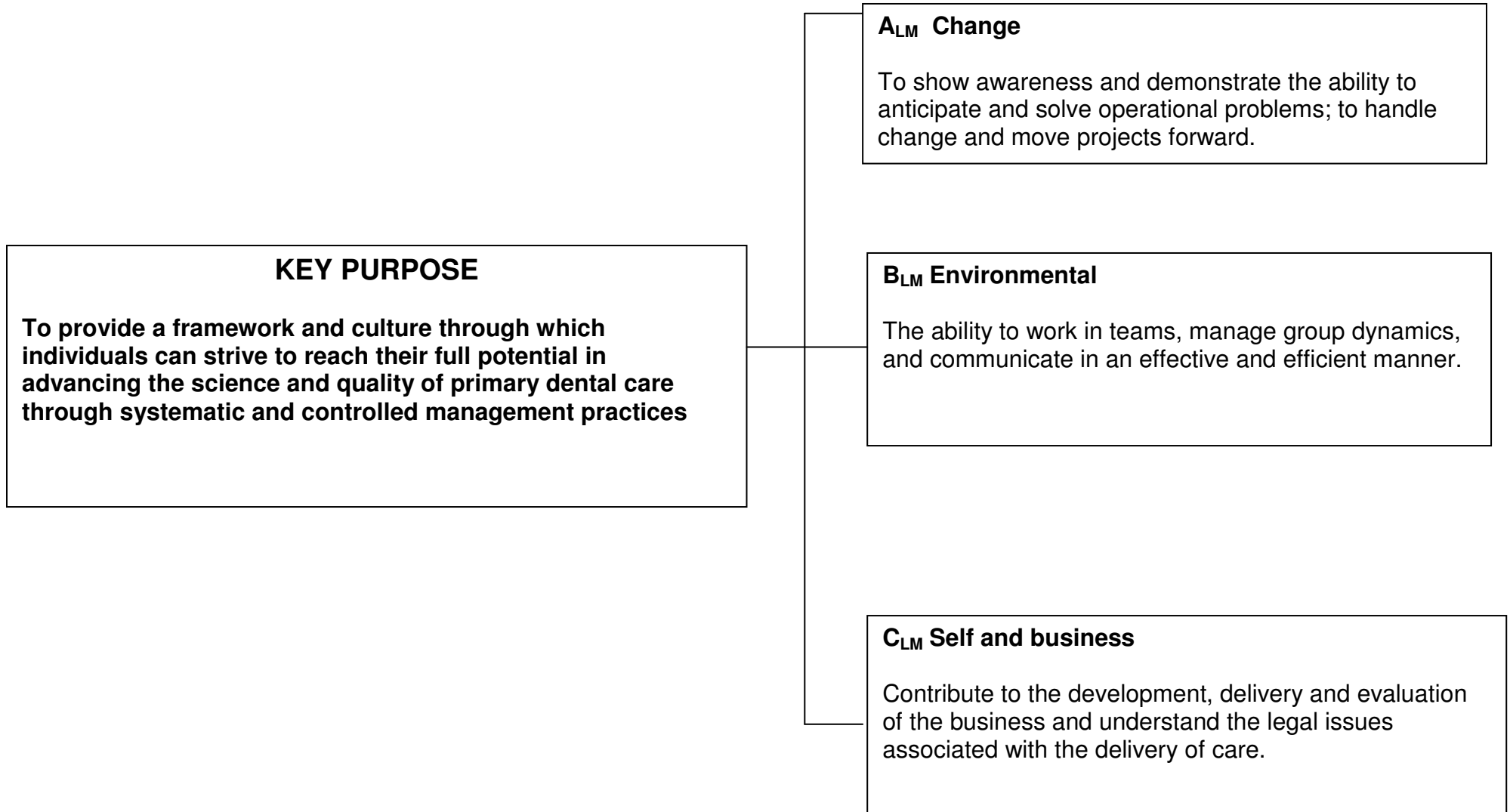
contracts, and to understand their significance

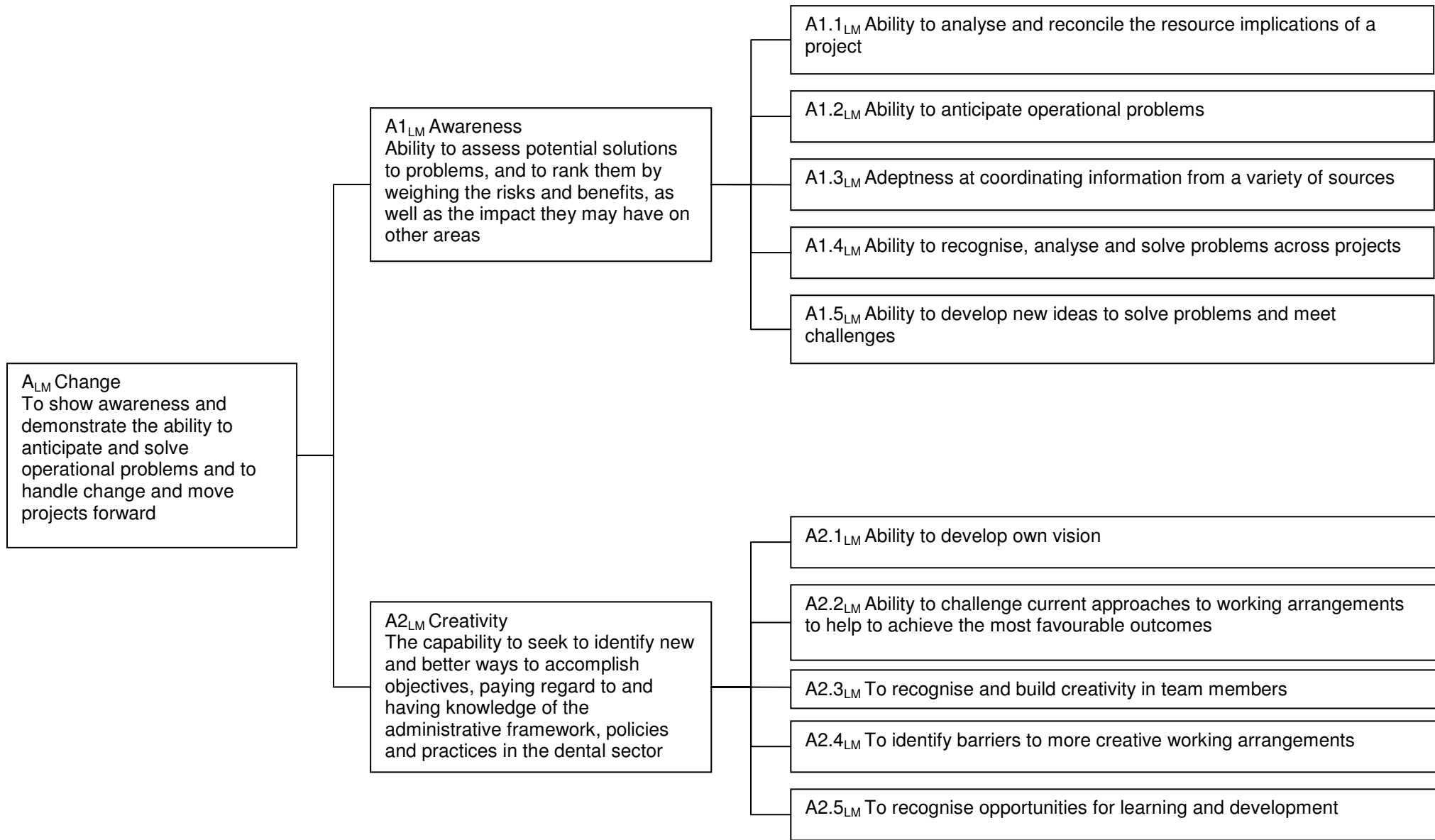
C6.3 understanding of what constitutes competence, negligence, fraud and abuse

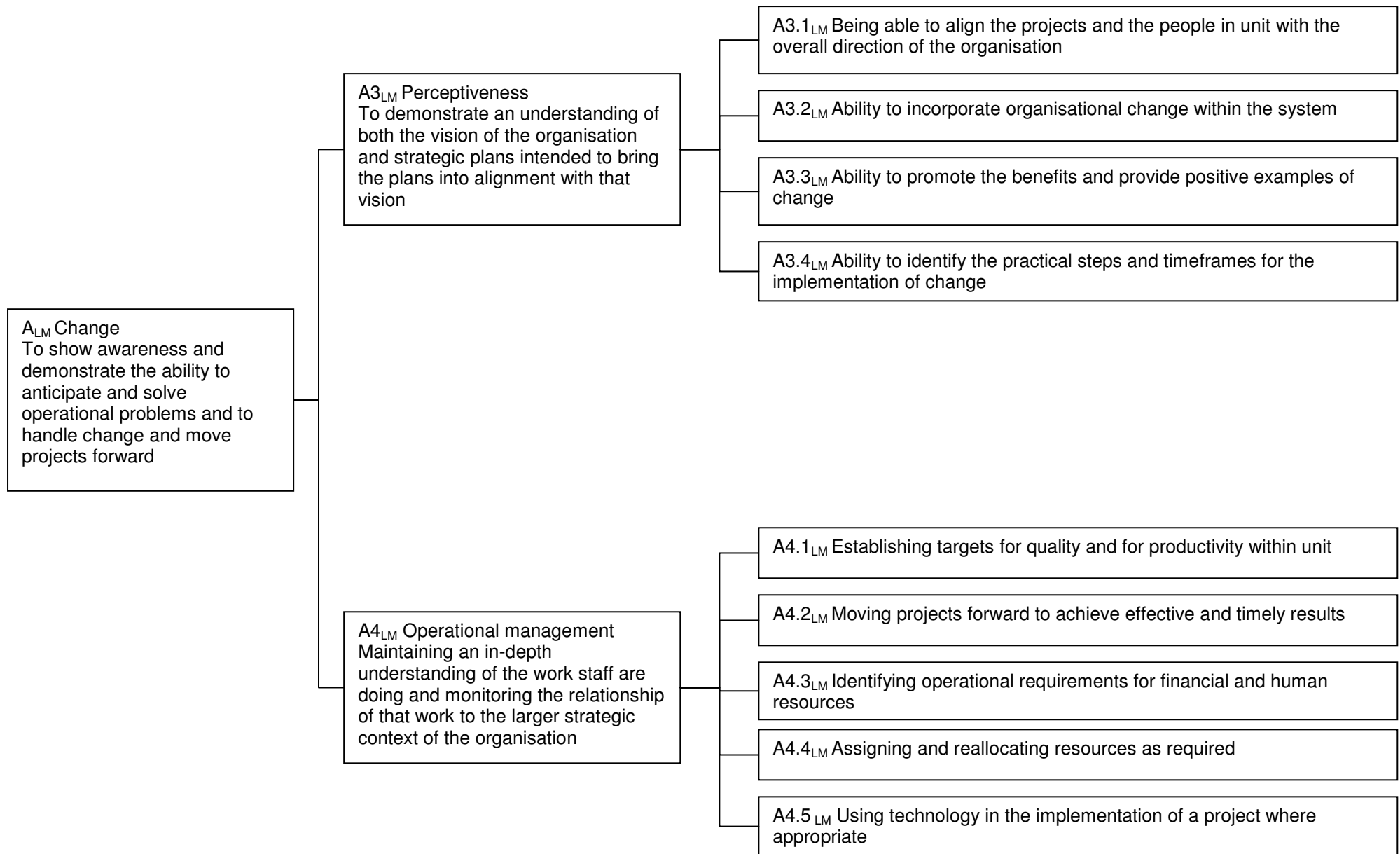
C6.4 understanding of employment legislation and ability to demonstrate an awareness of the various statutes impacting on care provision

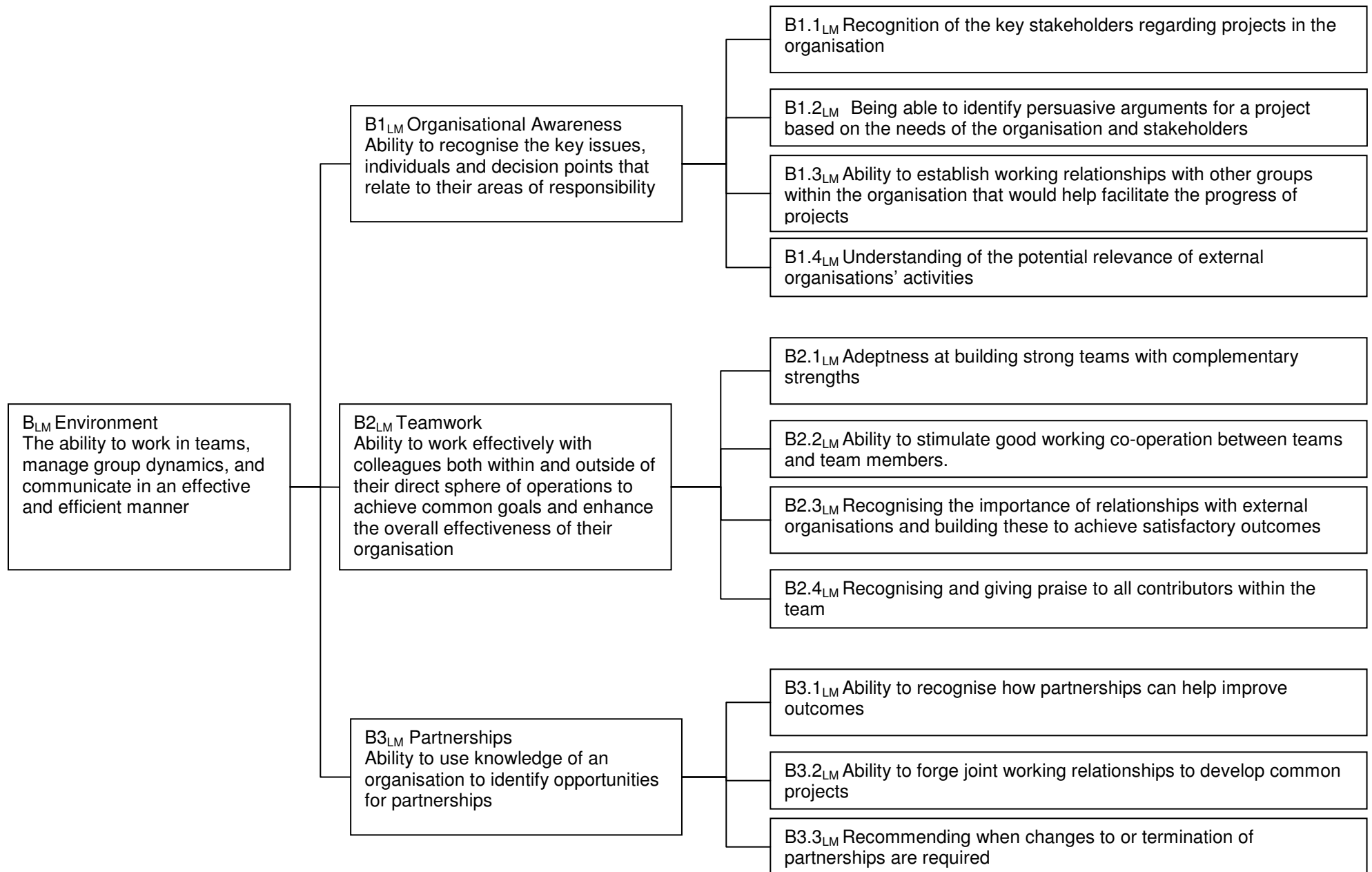
C6.5 understanding of the role of review operating within the care system including private arrangements and the care provider's obligation to challenge inappropriate decisions, and the mechanism and process involved.

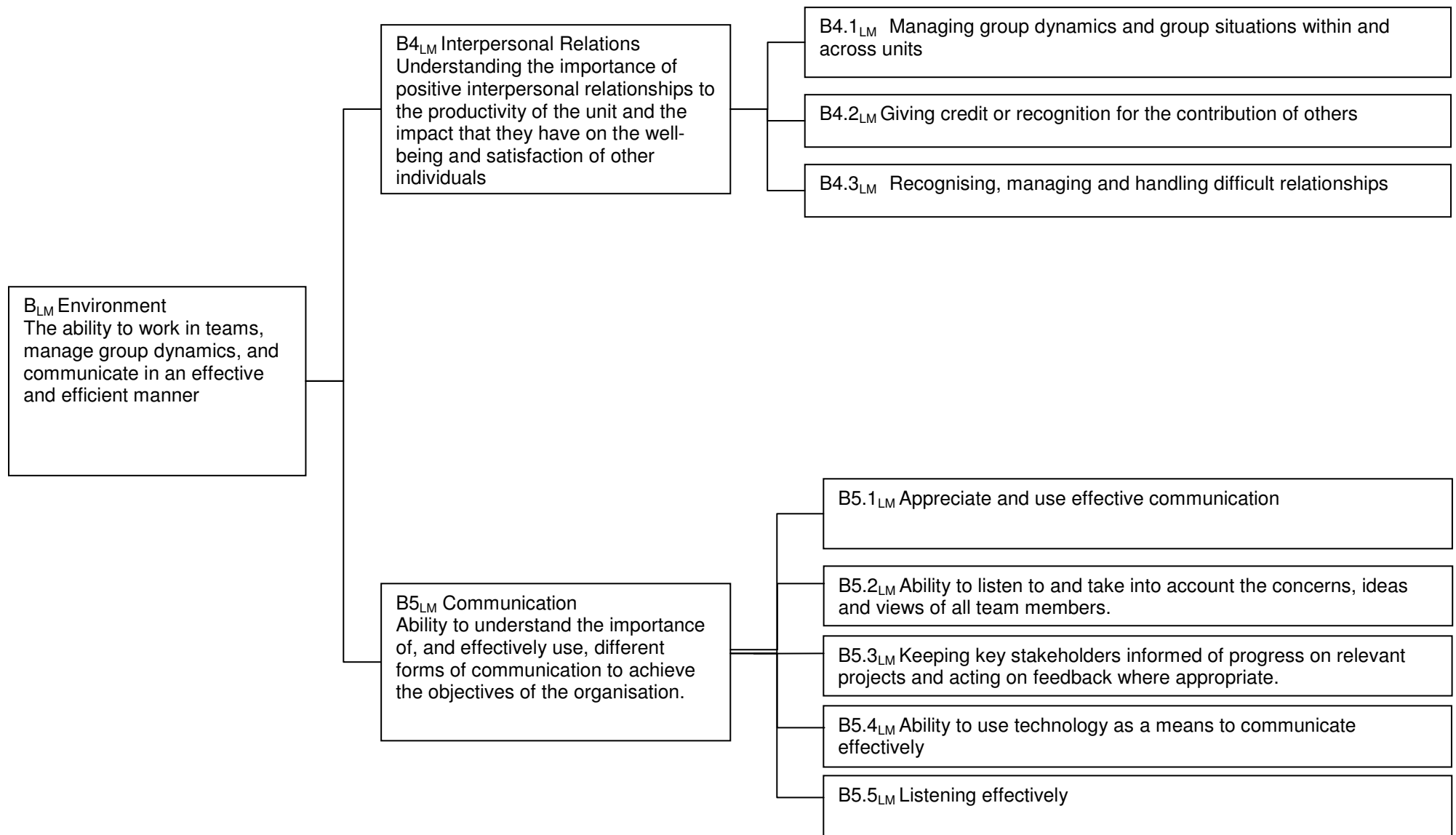
3.2 Functional map for leadership and management

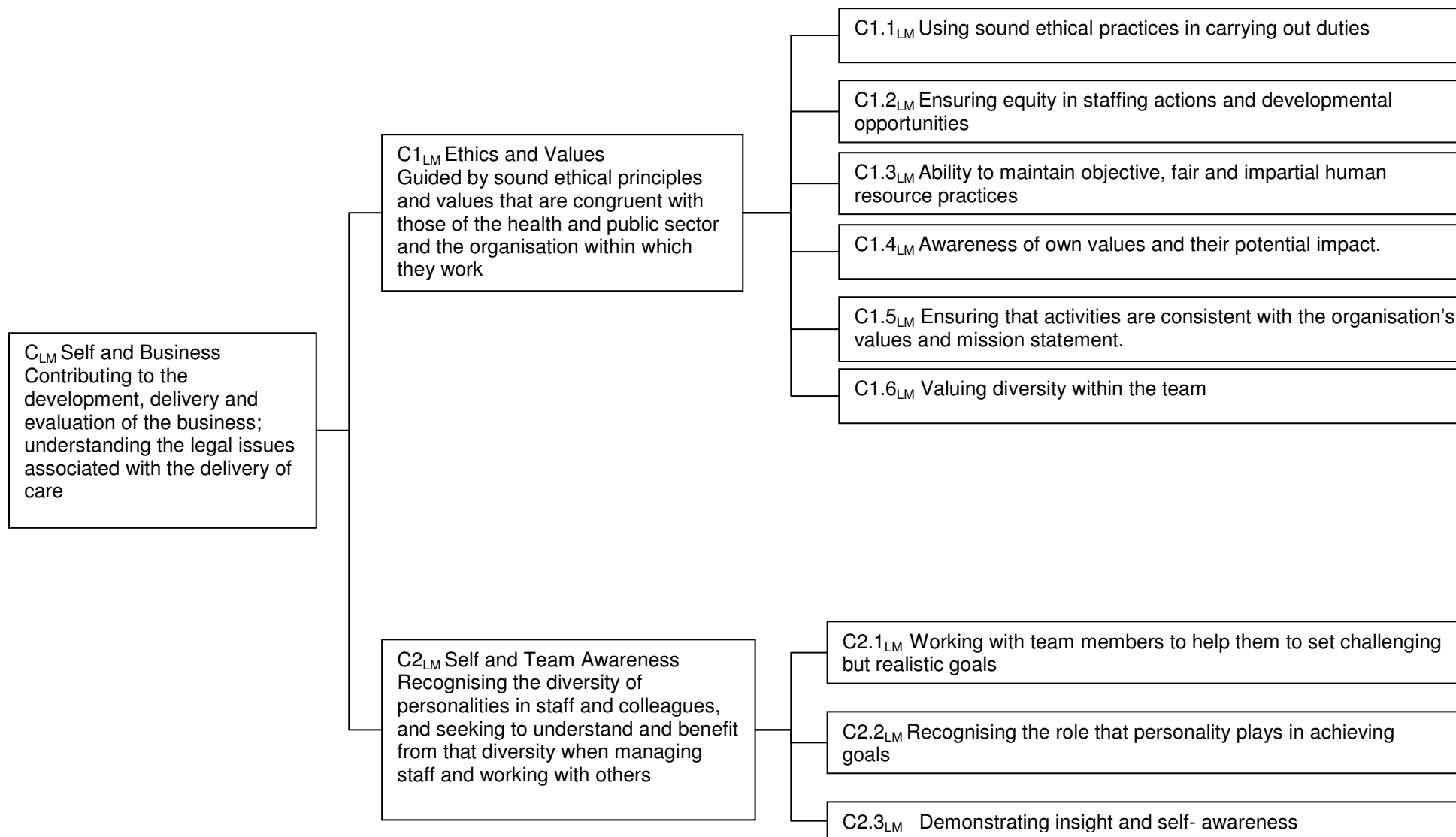


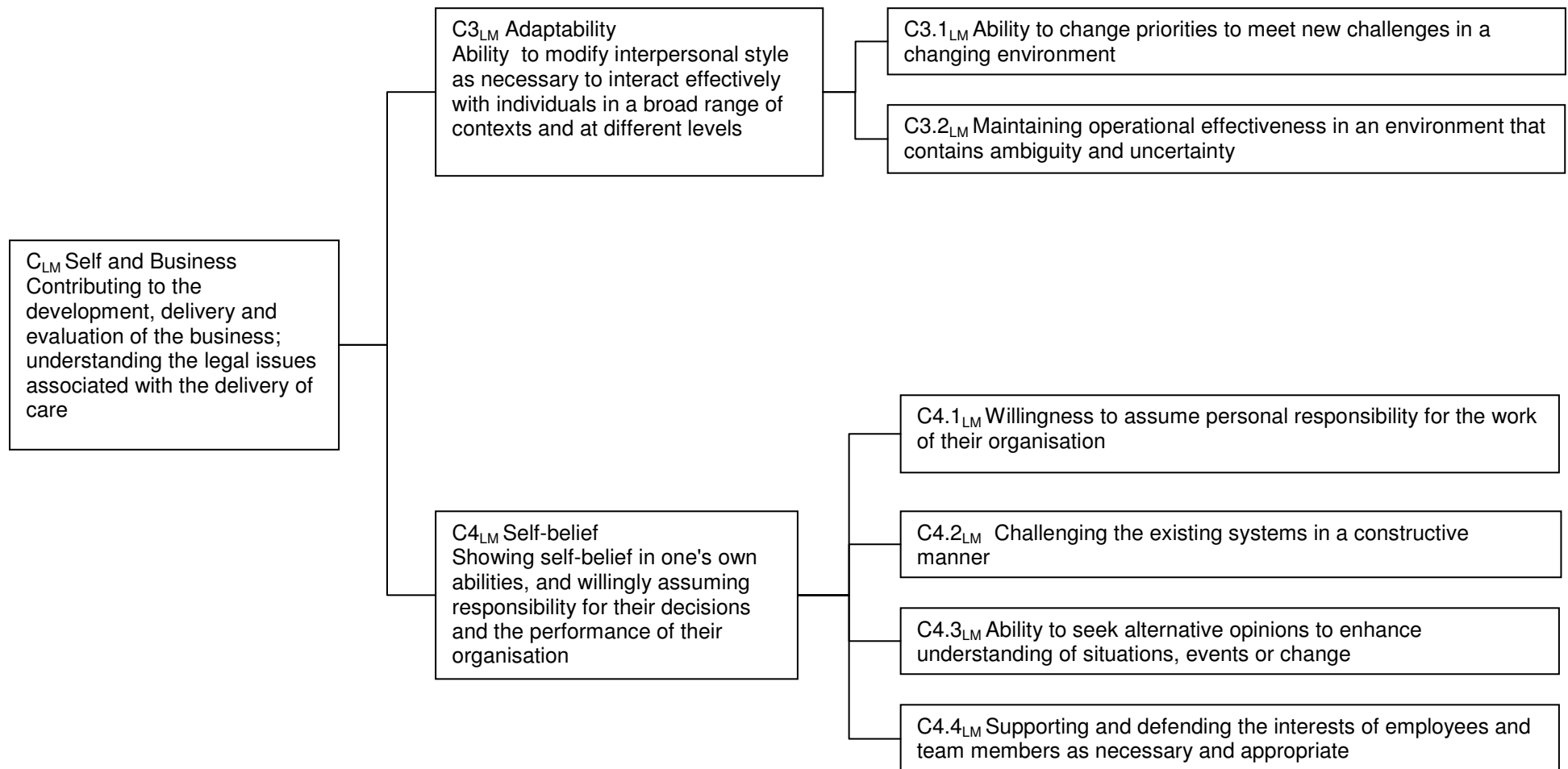


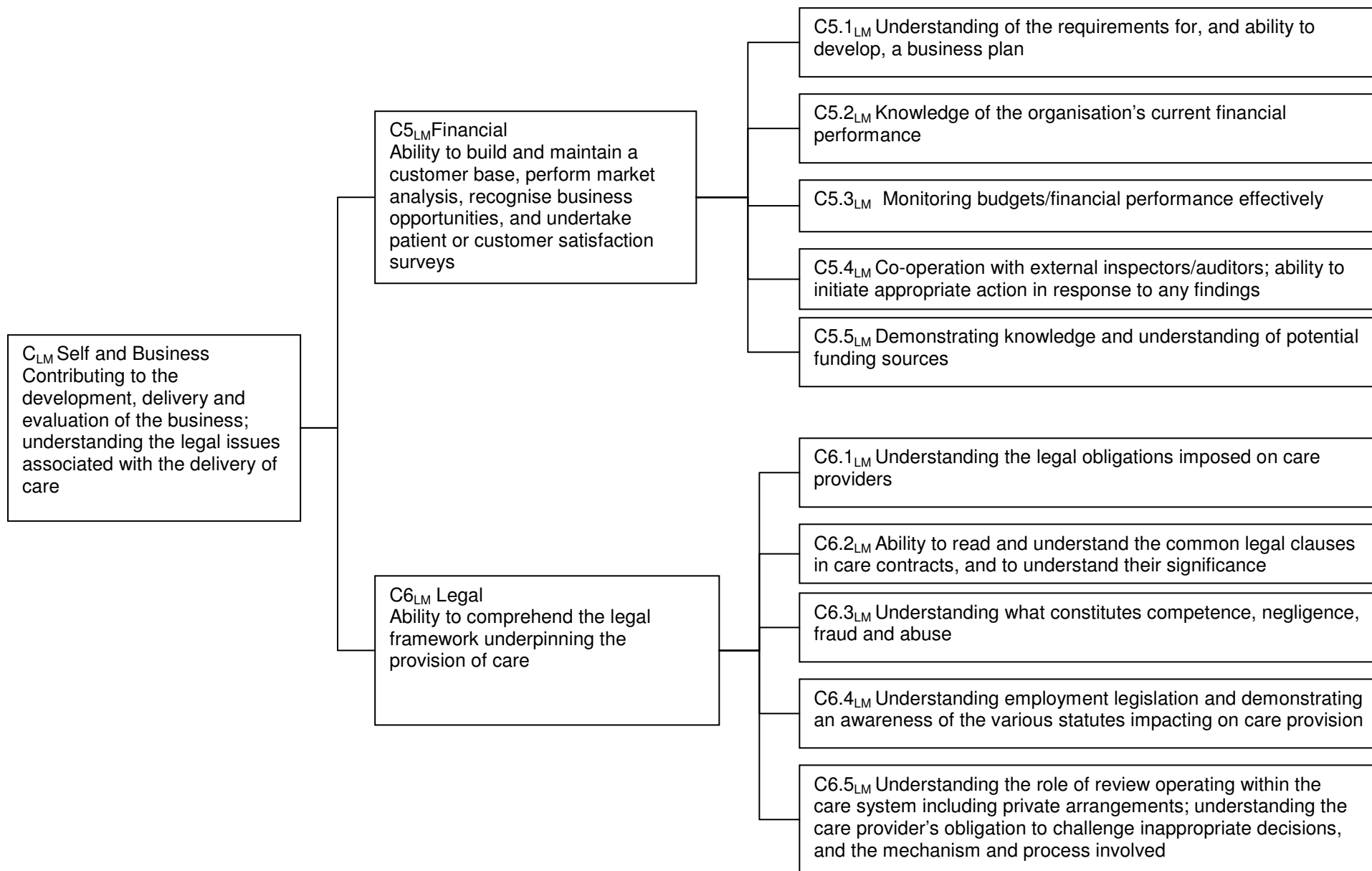












4. Using the competencies

The framework described in this document can be used from two differing perspectives, namely from that of a prospective employee or a prospective employer.

Firstly, when seeking a position within an organisation, a prospective employee can use the document to identify the competencies that he/she already possesses and those which he/she may wish to obtain to ensure that they can fulfil the job description when applying for a position. Secondly, a prospective employer can use the competency framework to map a job description against the competencies described.

4.1 The use of the framework by a prospective employer

Skills for Health, the Sector Skills Council for the UK health sector (see www.skillsforhealth.org.uk) has adopted a competence framework-based approach for human resource management and development. It has been argued that such an approach supports partnership development, quality assurance and the development of organisational culture. The FGDP(UK) is in agreement with this approach, and in consequence would suggest that prospective employers should follow it.

It is suggested that a prospective employer, such as a PCT, dental body corporate or other health agency, should define the competencies required for a leadership or management position using the framework described in the present document. These should then allow prospective applicants to match their personal development portfolio to the requirements of the position. Furthermore, the extent to which shortfalls exist may prompt the employing agency to develop training programmes for succession planning.

Further uses of competencies could include: identifying development areas for employees during their induction period and beyond; providing practitioners with guidance on what is expected of them and a model of good practice when carrying out unfamiliar activities; developing objectives with individual practitioners and teams and supporting them in developing their performance and achieving their objectives; assessing whether practitioners are performing to the required standards, and, if not, where the problems may lie.

It is also suggested that the competencies could help with identifying learning needs, designing training and development activities, and evaluating the impact of training and development on the individual's knowledge and skills, as well as on their performance and on the achievement of strategic objectives. They can inform the recognition of competent performance through feedback, certification or appraisal. It can also provide a clear framework so that individuals can plan, manage and evaluate their own continuing personal and professional development. They may help individuals to understand what is involved in new posts they might like to apply for, by helping to define the competences they could bring to these posts. It can also support the process of change management by helping to define new knowledge and skills needed to prepare practitioners to take over from others when they leave or retire, and to select the right individuals for the jobs⁷.

4.2 The use of the framework by a prospective employee

All dental professionals are required to undertake continual professional development. Individuals can use a competency framework to inform their continuing professional development through which learning occurs. The learning experiences can range from formal training programmes through to informal occasions for learning.

An individual might obtain the necessary competencies through a range of activities. This may be through attending formal training events or undertaking courses. Activities or opportunities presented through membership of professional associations, workplace activities, research activities and/or attendance at seminars and conferences could also provide experiences that could contribute to competency attainment. For these activities it would be necessary to demonstrate that the learning experiences have defined goals that are expressed in terms of the acquisition of new knowledge/competencies. Furthermore, these should be part of a personal development plan containing well-defined activities with a specified timeframe.

4.3 Assessment of competence

Competence assessment differs from more traditional forms of assessment in that competencies are assessed through evidence of completion of practical and reflective activities.

The assessment of competence is a complex process which, if it is to be of value, requires considerable thought and planning. There are, however, a number of basic principles to which any assessment system should adhere. These include a clear statement as to why the particular competence is being assessed; clarity as to what is being assessed, ensuring that the assessment process is relevant to the competence being assessed; clarity as to the criteria used in assessing the level of competence; and that the assessment process satisfies the criteria shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Criteria used in defining an appropriate competence assessment tool

Criterion	Definition
Validity	the tool assesses what it sets out to assess
Reliability	the tool produces consistent, repeatable results
Practicability	the tool is neither too difficult nor costly to administer
Fairness	the tool does not make inappropriate demands on the candidate
Usefulness	the tool contributes to effective learning

A suggested approach would be for the individual to develop a personal development portfolio that would help to provide a method of self-assessment on the progress towards competence. The portfolio could include items such as the individual's learning programme, reports undertaken and analysis of professional activities.

Evaluation would be based on performance and not just knowledge. It should include demonstration of an acceptable level of competence against the defined areas.

4.4 Development of training programmes

The final component in the development of a competence-based system is to ensure that the training programmes and processes are available for individuals who wish to develop their competence in the associated fields.

It is hoped that education providers will use the present document to aid the development of programmes that define training objectives outlining what individuals must do in order to acquire the skills, with course outlines that provide a variety of training arrangements which can be matched to the course objectives, and course syllabi.

A number of programmes are already in existence and education providers are encouraged to examine how dental components could be added to existing programmes in leadership and management.

4.5 Maintenance of competencies

The individual will be expected to maintain their competencies through education and continuing professional development.

Maintaining competence depends on an appropriate, ongoing, and self-directed programme of continuing professional development, which should be structured to the needs and responsibilities of the individual and the organisation, and supported by a personal development plan.

It is also recommended that CPD is undertaken in their special interest area as part of the general and verifiable CPD requirements of the General Dental Council.

Appendix I

Examples of use of the competencies

Below are three working examples showing how the competencies may be used in a primary care environment.

1 Use of the competencies by a primary care trust (PCT)

Laura is a Director of HR at a large PCT. She will be shortly recruiting for a Director of Workforce Development and Planning.

She is familiar with *Guidelines for Standards in the Development of Leadership and Management in the Dental Health Sector*, and uses elements of the competency framework to help her to draft the person specification for the job.

She uses the guidelines to describe the competencies and skills needed to do the job, and more specifically, how the job should be done.

Laura feels such an approach will help her to assess objectively an individual's competencies and skills at interview, and will also assist her in at a later stage in managing the progress and performance of the appointed member of staff.

2 Use of the competencies by a new manager in general dental practice

Katie originally qualified as a dental nurse but in the last 18 months has shown an increasing interest in the management of her practice. She has spent some time shadowing the work of her practice manager and also took on some of the day-to-day tasks when he took some short-term sick leave on two occasions. When the practice manager left, she applies for the post and is appointed.

Although Katie demonstrates clear enthusiasm and potential for practice management, she feels that her experience is quite limited. Apart from the work she has undertaken when covering the role of the previous manager, her experience was largely restricted to shadowing the role, and she has not undertaken a formal training course. Therefore shortly after her appointment, she meets with her practice principals and they agree that she needs a structured personal development plan. It is decided that this plan should be informed by the leadership and management competencies.

Together Katie and her principals look carefully at the competencies. Katie is pleasantly surprised to find that she has already achieved many of the competencies from a mix of previous experience (including experience gained as a dental nurse) and CPD courses undertaken to allow her to develop her interest further. However, they also identify some priority areas in which she will need to undertake further training and development.

They then identify areas in which Katie would be likely to gain competency through experience and on-the-job training, and those in which she needs to undertake a more formal training course, such as budgeting and business planning. Her PDP is then developed accordingly. The use of the framework has not only helped Katie to identify her training needs, but also made her realise what she had already achieved, leaving her more confident of realising her full potential in practice management.

3 Use of the competencies by a dentist

Tom is a general dental practitioner who has identified leadership and management as one of his areas of interest. He is the principal in his practice and until now he has received training in management from a number of short CPD courses, as well as by regularly reading the information he receives as a member of the Institute of Leadership and Management.

Although Tom's practice employs a practice manager, he wants to develop his own leadership skills further to ensure that he is effective in his role as a practice principal. He therefore uses the competencies to define his own role in the leadership and management of the practice and areas in which he needs to develop skills. Tom notes that he has a key role to play in developing systems for the delivery of care and in supporting future expansion of the practice. Using the guidelines, Tom identifies the areas of professional development that would be most relevant to him and seeks appropriate training and CPD to support them. Access to published competencies means that Tom could be much more focussed in putting together his personal development plan in a way that will benefit the development of the practice, and ultimately, the delivery of care to his patients.

Appendix II

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Appendix III

Membership of the development group

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