What do we do with these competencies?

Competencies documents are intended to provide a detailed, practical and ready guide that is easily interpreted and applied by those designing and managing services. This session covers the competencies developed in relation to professionals working in wheelchair services.

National Wheelchair Managers' Forum (NWMF) competencies
Frances Beavis, Gloucestershire Wheelchair Service

The National Wheelchair Managers Forum (NWMF) has published a range of competency documents for wheelchair therapists which help professionals and their managers identify gaps in training. The following were finalised in April 2014:

NWMF Foundation Competencies Wheelchair Therapist
NWMF Intermediate Competencies Senior Wheelchair Therapist
NWMF Advanced Competencies Senior Lead Therapist

Competencies for Therapy Assistant Band 3 were published in August 2015, with the aim to help individuals plan relevant objectives, and for appraisers to measure levels of competence approaching the Knowledge & Skills Framework (KSF) foundation gateway, or completing the 1st year in a wheelchair service.

All the NWMF competencies are available to download via www.wheelchairmanagers.nhs.uk/pubs.html along with a blank template for managers to create their own local competencies.

Creating local competencies
Susan Gold, West of Scotland Mobility and Rehabilitation Centre (WestMARC)

Susan will describe the creating of local competencies for WestMARC based on those developed by NWMF. She will also report on her recent pilot at WestMARC, where she has used the World Health Organisation's basic wheelchair service training package (WSTP) to train a new member of staff. The pilot followed on from an assessment of the WSTP basic that Susan and fellow PMG committee member, Helen Critten-Rourke, undertook in early 2017 to measure it against the NWMF foundation competencies.

Rehabilitation Engineering Services Management Group (RESMaG)/Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine (IPEM)
Professor Colin Gibson, Chair of the RESMaG Council

The RESMaG/IPEM competencies were first developed in the 1990s in response to growing calls for clarity on the respective roles within the broad cross-section of healthcare professionals delivering assistive technology services across the UK, and on the underpinning knowledge and skills necessary to deliver safe and effective care. The introduction of *Agenda for Change* and development of the *Healthcare Science Career Pathway* in the 2000s further underlined the need for a comprehensive range of competencies documents, the most recent versions of which are:

Rehabilitation Engineering Services: Functions, Competencies and Resources (RESMaG 2012)

Rehabilitation Engineering Services for Wheelchair and Special Seating (RESMaG 2012)

Rehabilitation Engineering Services for Prosthetics and Orthotics (RESMaG 2012)

Rehabilitation Engineering Services for Electronic Assistive Technology (RESMaG 2015)

all of which are available via http://resmag.org.uk/, as is:

What Can Rehabilitation Engineering Offer Telecare Services? Final Report of the Rehabilitation Engineering into Telecare Services (RENTS) Project. HDTI (November 2013), which offers a more general description of the developing role of rehabilitation engineering professionals in Telecare.

In short, these documents describe what employers can expect of a Clinical Engineer (HCPC registered Clinical Scientist), a Rehabilitation Engineer (RCT registered Clinical Technologist/AHCS registered Healthcare Science Practitioner, or a Healthcare Science Associate (often referred to as a Rehabilitation Engineering Technician or similar); how these roles best fit within a multi-disciplinary team, and how they can best contribute to the delivery, improvement and development of assistive technology.