



CHCCCS007

Develop and
implement
service
programs



CHCCCS007

Develop and implement service programs

Release 2

Learner Guide

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CHCCCS007 Develop and implement service programs, Release 2

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Aspire acknowledges the homelands of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and pays our respect to Country



Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCCCS007 Develop and implement service programs*, Release 2.

Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program.

How to work through this Learner Guide

This Learner Guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the Learner Guide you need to read, and which Practice Tasks and Learning Checkpoints you need to complete.

Feature of the Learner Guide	How you can use each feature	
Learning content	Read each topic in this Learner Guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.	
Examples	These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.	
Practice Tasks	Practice Tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which Practice Tasks to complete.	
Callouts	Callouts reiterate key learning points to help students revise for their assessments.	
Weblinks	Weblinks provide learners with additional content to contextualise their learning and develop their understanding.	
Videos	Videos provide a visual reference of key concepts to aid comprehension and guide learner exploration. Each video is accessed by a QR code in the Learner Guide (or a button in the eBook version) for ease of access.	 
Glossary/margin definitions	Key terms are defined where they first appear to help consolidate understanding. A glossary of terms is provided at the end of the Learner Guide to assist learner revision of key concepts.	
Summaries	Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.	
Learning Checkpoints	There are Learning Checkpoints at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which activities to complete. These activities give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.	
Case studies	Case studies are interspersed throughout the learning content to provide a workplace setting that contextualises key concepts.	

Foundation skills

As you complete learning using this guide, you will be developing the foundation skills relevant for this unit. Foundation skills are the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills and the employability skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

These skills are listed below:

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding how documents are presented and being able to navigate through documents Understanding industry- and job-specific terminology Interpreting key information in relevant documents Understanding routine workplace checklists and documentation
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning, drafting and writing reports and documents Communicating through written letters, email and online Recording progress; reporting incidents
Oral communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarifying instructions Providing information Supporting others through encouragement, negotiation and conflict resolution Using body language to model desired behaviour and responding to others' body language
Numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calculating costs, weights, measurements of height and distance Interpreting measurements
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding your job role, organisational procedures and legal responsibilities Managing your work and seeing how well you are going Making goals for yourself at work Seeking professional development opportunities for continuous improvement
Problem-solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying problems Working out how to fix a problem using problem-solving processes Reviewing the outcome
Initiative and enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising opportunities to develop and apply new ideas Generating ideas by thinking of new ways to do something Making suggestions to improve work
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working well with other people by cooperating, collaborating, encouraging and building rapport
Planning and organising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning your workload and commitments Implementing tasks Completing work on time Knowing how to deal with hazards and risks



Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Self-management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding and applying decision-making processes • Reviewing your behaviour and the impact of your decisions
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiently using digitally based technologies and systems correctly and safely • Accessing, organising and presenting information • Using equipment correctly and safely

Note: Not every unit of competency will contain all foundation skills.

What do you already know?

Use the following table to identify what you may already know. This may assist you to work out what to focus on in your learning.

Topic	Key outcome	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1 Engage consumers in analysing their service needs	1A Develop a plan for consumer participation	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1B Investigate the needs of individuals	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1C Recognise barriers to participation and monitor changing needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1D Consult and collaborate with other services and networks	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1E Evaluate the organisational context	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident



Topic	Key outcome	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 2 Develop programs	2A Facilitate input into program development	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2B Consider individual differences in the planning process	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2C Determine resource requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2D Develop systems, procedures and evaluation methods	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2E Document the program	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 3 Implement and monitor programs	3A Communicate roles and responsibilities to stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3B Facilitate the provision of training	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3C Monitor service delivery, user interactions and feedback	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3D Identify and address problems and maintain documentation	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 4 Evaluate programs	4A Assess the capacity of programs to meet objectives	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	4B Evaluate feedback and modify programs as needed	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident





Topic 1: Engage consumers in analysing their service needs

- 1A Develop a plan for consumer participation
- 1B Investigate the needs of the person
- 1C Recognise barriers to participation and monitor changing needs
- 1D Consult and collaborate with other services and networks
- 1E Evaluate the organisational context



1A

Develop a plan for consumer participation

By including the person receiving support in the planning process, you give them the opportunity to have their say, and ensure the service plan addresses their needs.

Including consumers in decisions about service provision is most effective when it follows a formal procedure from the organisation's program planning and policy documentation.

A participation plan may be as simple as asking questions at the end of a service and ensuring feedback is actioned as part of continuous improvement. In large complex organisations a more structured approach may be needed, and resources may need to be set aside to ensure the work is done.

Engage the person receiving support in decision-making

Strength-based practice

An outcome-focused way of working that emphasises a person's personal strengths as well as their social and community networks.

Strength-based practice assumes that all service users have strengths as well as challenges and suggests that outcomes are better when people have a say in the planning process.

The extent to which a person is able to be involved in decision-making depends on the nature of the service, however, all planning should build in some capacity to engage people in the decisions that are being made about their lives.

Service users can be engaged at the level of their own case plan and at the broader level of organisational feedback about the way a service is delivered.

Service users

Individuals who are accessing support from a service.

These two ways that a person receiving support can be engaged need to be considered separately in service planning.

All organisations should have a consumer engagement plan that allows for input by service users across all aspects of service delivery. The plan should be linked to all individual staff performance plans, management reports and governance reviews.



Follow these steps when you are involved in developing a plan for your organisation.

1	Identify stakeholders	Key stakeholders usually include service users, staff, managers and board members. Sometimes funding bodies require evidence of plans and consumer engagement activity. Consumer engagement plans may also be required in accreditation processes. Using them is an essential part of continuous improvement and quality assurance.
2	Identify methods	Depending on the stakeholder, choose an appropriate consulting method. Engage service users in the case planning process, by responding to follow-up surveys, using a feedback forum or encouraging them to attend focus groups. Managers and boards are usually involved through reports and presentations.
3	Identify relevant areas	All areas of an organisation that are directly concerned with service delivery should be aware of and involved in the consumer engagement plan. These can include reception, finance (if payments are involved) and administrators of other relevant service areas such as residential or respite services. Direct care workers should always be involved in the consumer engagement plan.
4	Develop protocols	Policies and procedures should be written to ensure the consumer engagement plan is embedded in strategic plans, performance plans, board reports, quality assurance and continuous improvement strategies.
5	Develop tools	The tools used will depend on the stakeholder and the nature of the engagement. Case plans should be set up to show evidence of service user engagement, including: information given, questions asked and service-user input obtained. Tools for organisational input may include satisfaction surveys, phone follow-up or use of suggestion boxes.
6	Ensure review	Evaluation should be built into the planning process and monitored to ensure ongoing compliance. A regular review of service-user input can be included in casework supervision. Regularly collecting material for management and board reports can also strengthen evaluative practices.
7	Ensure response	For the consumer engagement plan to be effective it must be part of a closed loop that includes implementing actions in response to service-user feedback. Types of actions may include changing appointment times, involving other family members in the planning process, or reducing waiting time for appointments. Reports to management and boards should always include the action taken in response to feedback. Plans need to acknowledge that some service users may not be satisfied with the actions taken or their level of involvement in decisions.

Program planning principles and processes

Consumer engagement

An active process whereby a person who accesses a service is involved in decision-making.

Consumer engagement should fit within the organisation's program planning principles and processes and encourage the development of plans that are comprehensive, efficient and inclusive.

When developing plans to involve service users you should be aware of and follow program planning principles and process.

For more information about consumer engagement, visit: aspirelr.link/nsw-consumer-engagement

Examples of relevant program planning policies and principles include:

- using plain English in written and spoken contexts
- ensuring service users understand the complaints/appeals processes
- showing identification before interviewing the service user
- providing interpreters or other communication aids
- recording information and outcomes
- sharing written summaries with the service user for verification.

Example

Involving users in the assessment of service delivery

Each year, a community health services agency completes an internal assessment of service delivery. Feedback comes from a sample of service users, and/or their family members or significant others, who have used the service in the past year. They complete an anonymous survey, then participate in a forum to give feedback about their experiences, facilitated by an external consultant. The facilitator asks questions, such as: how people found out about the service; how they found the intake process; their views on staff ability, skills, and attitude; and whether the service met their needs. They are also asked for suggestions for how services can be improved.

After the forum, the facilitator collates the responses and presents the management committee with a report showing patterns in responses, repeat issues and a response summary.

The management committee meets to review the report and consider an action plan to respond to the feedback. This year, the report shows that people are dissatisfied with the ability of some staff. The committee compares the report with those from the previous two years to see which areas have improved and whether there are any ongoing issues. A summary of the report and action plan is then included in the organisation's annual report.



Practice Task 1

Question 1

Name two factors that may impact on service-user participation.

Question 2

Which of the following are steps that should be taken when developing a consumer engagement plan? Tick all that apply.

- Identification of clients
- Consulting previous plans
- Development of relevant tools
- Development of protocols and procedures
- Creating an immediate action plan

Question 3

Which of the following organisational policies and procedures may be relevant when consulting with consumers? Tick all that apply.

- Ensuring service users understand complaints/appeals processes
- Relying on memory when interviewing clients
- Using technical language
- Discussing the plan with friends for their input
- Providing interpreters or other communication aids

1B

Investigate the needs of the person

The needs and rights of people using services must always be a priority when planning service delivery.

Disability

A long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment that may hinder a person's full and effective participation in society.

While organisations should have clear consumer participation policies and procedures there is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to including people in decision-making.

A variety of obstacles affect individual participation, and strategies need to be developed to address them as they arise.

Organisations need clear plans and well-developed support systems that ensure that service users' rights and needs are at the heart of all service provision.

Culture

The social behaviour and norms found in human societies, which are influenced by race, religion, economic status, family life, health, educational or governmental system of their members.

Uphold the rights of service users

Workers at all levels of the organisation are responsible for ensuring the basic rights of service users are upheld.

It is important that people's rights with respect to **disability**, **culture**, language, gender and **gender identity**, age, and location be met.

Gender identity

A person's internal experience and naming of their gender, which can either correspond to, or be different from, the sex they were assigned at birth.

As a community services worker, you uphold people's rights by ensuring:

- you respect the person's culture and are sensitive to cultural differences
- aids or translators are provided to help people communicate if necessary
- people can access services no matter where they live and whether or not they have independent transport
- privacy, confidentiality and discretion are maintained
- people know they have the right to an advocate to help them understand information and make decisions
- you treat people with dignity and respect and work to maintain their independence
- services they receive do not pose a risk of injury or harm to them or their property
- you consider the person's condition and mobility when assessing their suitability for a service.



Individual needs

The following table outlines some of the major factors to be mindful of when making assessments for service planning. It gives examples of issues that may arise.

Disability	A person with a vision impairment has requested information about your service but all the available information is in written form.
Language	You are working with a young woman who is homeless. She brings in her grandfather, saying he has agreed to let her to stay in his flat. The grandfather does not speak English.
Gender	An older man has requested that a male worker provide his personal care assistance for showering.
Culture	A father has asked about his children being able to continue their cultural practices while in foster care; they require Halal meals and time to pray each day.
Age	An elderly woman can independently complete activities of daily living provided she is allowed additional time. She explains that she prefers to do things herself even if it takes a bit longer.
Location	A person would like help to access local services, such as the GP, greengrocers, and library, as she wishes to remain in a familiar community and environment.
Environment	An older woman you are visiting tells you she never leaves her flat because she is frightened of the gangs in the neighbourhood.

Impairment

A diminished ability or loss of function.

Support participation

There are many ways that the worker and their organisation can support people to participate more in service planning. It just requires some investigation. The list below outlines strategies for investigating the needs of individuals.

Participation checklist

- Observe and ask the person questions.
- Refer to research and relevant documentation about the person in assessment.
- Refer to experts when needed.
- Use a person-centred approach when planning.
- Be culturally sensitive.
- Be aware of people's rights.
- Offer a variety of ways for the person to provide feedback.
- Take action on the person's feedback.
- Keep the person informed about changes.



Engage service users at all levels of program planning

Planning for consumer engagement should be integrated into all levels of the organisation.

It is not enough to rely on case workers and other direct care workers to ensure the service user’s voice is heard. Responsibility starts at board level and should be filtered through the organisation at every level.

Strategic plan	A strategic plan is a fundamental planning document for all organisations. Service-user engagement should be included within the strategic plan.
Policies and procedures	An organisation’s policies and procedures should be designed to promote consumer engagement and developed based on feedback from consumers.
Budget	Consumer engagement should ideally be included as a budget item to ensure adequate resources and supports are provided.
Performance plans	Program and individual performance plans need to include measurable targets for service-user consultation, inclusion and feedback.
Human resources	The human resource plan should reference individual consumer needs to guide staff training needs and performance reviews, as well as minimum requirements for staffing qualifications and experience.
Management	Managers are responsible for supporting staff to engage service users in: planning; monitoring staff performance; providing resources to assist with participation; and reporting to the board regarding feedback and actions that need to be taken in response to consumer needs.
Governance	The board is ultimately responsible for ensuring that consumer participation occurs at all levels of service planning. It is also responsible for ensuring that action occurs in response to feedback received.

Governance

The system or processes by which an organisation is controlled and operates, and its mechanisms of accountability.



Example

Supports for people with different needs

Fatima is 14 years old. She came to Australia as an asylum seeker from Sri Lanka with her parents five years ago. She lives in public housing in a regional city. The area has a reputation for being unsafe owing to high levels of drug and alcohol use. Fatima's mother is now her sole carer. There are five other children in the family.

Fatima's mother washes dishes at a restaurant for 12 hours a day and does not speak English. Recently, Fatima was picked up by the police at 3am during a drug raid at a nearby house. She has also not been attending school regularly for the past six months and often stays out all night.

A child protection worker interviews Fatima at the police station. She says she does not want to go home because her mother hates her.

The child protection worker contacts a worker from a city-based multicultural organisation, who speaks Sinhala and can interpret for Fatima's mother. She agrees to visit Fatima's mother with the child protection worker. The visit reveals that Fatima's mother is very angry with her. She has been trying to keep her locked in the flat when she is at work, but the other children have been helping her to escape. The mother is relieved to finally be able to speak to someone in her own language who she can explain to the importance of young women maintaining their good reputation. The interpreter is able to make links for Fatima's mother with other women from Sri Lanka parenting children alone. Fatima returns home and is also connected to an agency supporting young women to stay in school. Fatima and her mother agree to have three sessions with the child protection worker to talk about the future. The interpreter is included in these Skype sessions.



Practice Task 2

Question 1

List three individual needs that may affect service planning.

Question 2

List three actions management can take to support effective consumer participation.

Question 3

Briefly outline how a referral to an expert can assist service workers investigate the needs of service users.

1C

Recognise barriers to participation and monitor changing needs

Obstacles to participation can arise from the service user, the organisation, or the environment within which the service is being delivered.

To recognise **barriers**, including communications that may negatively affect users of the service you are delivering, you need to take a 360-degree approach.

How things are said, the way they are written down, the mood at reception, and the inclusivity of images and promotional materials need to be considered, along with the usual barriers related to physical access, cultural and gender awareness and learning difficulties.

Most workers understand what needs to be addressed in these areas without even consulting service users. Well-managed organisations don't wait for consumers to complain; they plan. Here are some examples of barriers.

Individual barriers	Individual barriers include physical or mental disabilities, fear and lack of knowledge, mistrust and learning or language difficulties.
Organisational barriers	Organisational barriers include lack of signage, lack of privacy, translation gaps, complex procedures, a failure to provide communication tools, lack of access and a culture of excluding service users from planning.
Environmental barriers	Barriers found in the environment include poor public transport, lack of suitable housing, low or no income, gender and age discrimination and a lack of cultural awareness.

Remove barriers to participation

Various **strategies** can be used to remove barriers to participation. Some, such as building access, are obvious and organisations should have systems in place to address them prior to receiving feedback from service users.

Other barriers, such as a lack of diversity in display materials, may only become an issue when a service user highlights the issue or makes a complaint.

Barriers

Factor/s in a person's environment that, through their absence or presence, limit functioning and create disability.

Strategy

A plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim.



Here are some strategies to help remove barriers.

Physical and mental disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intake and assessment procedures that focus on identifying individual needs• Communication aids and tools• Accessible spaces• Clear signage
Language and learning barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision of interpreters• Use of plain English
Fear and mistrust	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcoming environments• Open and inclusive planning• Good communication• Independent advocates• Provision of clear information
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public transport timetables• Supported transport
Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Culturally competent staff• Inclusive use of language on signs• Culturally sensitive display materials• Welcoming reception space
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adequate access to services• Gender awareness training for staff• Organisational involvement in local issues• Referrals to other support organisations

Example

Address barriers to participation

Liam comes to a community health centre focus group that has been organised to gather feedback from the local community about its services.

The group of 10 participants is diverse in terms of age, cultures and gender; however, Liam, who is visually impaired, is the only person there with an identifiable disability.

The group coordinator, Elise, has not been told about Liam's disability. This is problematic, as the session depends entirely on people reading information from handouts and contributing to written comments on iPads.



Elise approaches Liam and apologises. He tells her not to worry as it happens all the time. She asks him about how these things have been solved for him in the past and what he would like to do. He tells her that if the others read aloud what is written down, he should be able to keep up.

Liam picks things up very quickly and proves to be one of the main contributors, identifying ways services can be improved. His input relates mainly to ways the service can attract young people.

Elise then reports on the group at the next team planning session. She suggests when organising for participants to attend focus groups in the future, they ask ahead of time about any support requirements so they can ensure an inclusive environment.

Interact and consult with people to monitor their changing needs

To evaluate whether a service is meeting the needs of the client, it is important that interaction occurs both formally and informally.

Monitoring changing needs is part of an organisation's quality assurance or continuous improvement process. Planning should ensure that there is an ongoing cycle of interacting and consulting with service users to monitor their needs, and that this process is linked to the one that addresses changing needs in response to feedback.

There are various formal and informal ways of interacting and consulting with service users. Managers and coordinators need to ensure that these interactions occur as part of a planned process that is accountable and measurable.

The service user must always remain the focus of all assessment, delivery, and review processes. Here are some examples of methods to facilitate service-user interactions.

Monitoring
Observing and checking the progress or quality of something over a period of time.

Meetings

Regular meetings are essential to review case plans. They may take place once a year or more frequently if needed. The meetings should focus on any developments or changes in a situation that mean services need to change. These meetings are an opportunity to review the plan and goals and see where changes have occurred. They are also an opportunity to ask people for feedback on the service.



Informal feedback	Comments about the service from families or significant others can be obtained informally by phoning them or inviting them to visit the service. Encourage feedback by making the service user and their families feel welcome. Make sure you are approachable and reassuring. Try to address their questions and concerns. Through this informal feedback process, you may receive useful information, such as that a service user does not get along with a community services worker; that the person's preferences and goals have changed; or that service times are no longer suitable.
Committees	Committees, such as resident action groups, allow people who use a service to directly contribute to the policies and procedures of the service. Depending on the skills and needs of the service users, committees can be supported by a staff member. Decisions made must reflect only the users' needs. Some committees run by service users have been able to access separate funding to employ an advocate (who is independent of the service) to assist them with running the committee.
Two-way communication	Good communication is essential when interacting with service users. Spend time listening to and getting to know your service users. This is invaluable in terms of being attuned to how the service is meeting needs. Regular informal feedback, such as observations and chats, and making sure staff are accessible and available, helps in the collection of ongoing feedback from people who use the organisation's services. If people feel they know the staff and the staff value their feedback, they will be more likely to speak frankly and honestly.

Monitor changing needs

Regular, meaningful consumer feedback is one way to ensure the services provided by the organisation or agency stay focused on the people who use the service. There are many methods to obtain service-user feedback to monitor changing needs.

Suggestion boxes	Suggestion boxes can be used to encourage people to provide feedback. They may be used by service users and others who access the service, such as family members and friends. Suggestion boxes provide the opportunity for anonymity, which may be preferred if the person has complaints or concerns about the quality of services. Many organisations have online portals where service users can provide feedback at any time.
Complaints processes	A formal complaints process must be in place in any organisation delivering community services. The standards that underpin these organisations stipulate that service users, family members, advocates and carers have the right to complain without losing access or having reduced access to the service. All organisations must have a complaints policy and process that service users can easily follow. They must make sure that users understand what they need to do if they wish to complain.



<p>Feedback forms</p>	<p>Many organisations have feedback forms available for people to record positive and negative comments about the organisation or agency providing a service. Feedback can be provided in hardcopy or online forms that can be completed anonymously. That said, it is a good idea to encourage the person to identify themselves so the organisation can respond directly and/or arrange a meeting with the person and resolve the issue.</p>
<p>Surveys</p>	<p>Surveys can be conducted annually to obtain feedback about specific aspects of service delivery. Surveying a range of stakeholders, including other service providers that your agency works with, can be an effective mechanism to obtain feedback about how well the service is meeting people's needs. For example, an agency may receive feedback from another agency that their referral processes are cumbersome and hard to understand and that this is making it difficult for older people to access the service.</p>
<p>Service-user assessments</p>	<p>Service-user assessments can be conducted regularly by agencies. A formal service-user assessment of the service may form part of the agency's funding agreement. During an assessment, an independent facilitator meets with a sample group of people who are receiving services and asks them a range of questions about the quality of the service, etc. Individual responses remain anonymous, and a summary report is provided to the agency. Depending on the structure of the service, the agency may be required to submit this report to their board of management or the government department they are funded by.</p>

Example

Monitor changing needs

A disability service provider has always employed an activities officer on site to organise sport and leisure activities for residents. A recent survey of clients provided a lot of negative feedback about the sport and leisure activities offered, with people wanting more variety and preferring to join local events in the community rather than attend activities on site.

Based on the feedback results, the facility outsourced their sport and leisure management to a local organisation focused on integrating people with disabilities into local mainstream clubs.



Practice Task 3

Question 1

List three processes or communications that may act as barriers to individual participation.

Question 2

Which of the following address barriers to participation? Tick all that apply.

- Technical language
- Staff who speak different languages
- Communication aids
- Culturally competent staff
- Having interpreters available for clients

Question 3

Identify one mechanism you could use to support a person with a vision impairment to participate in service planning.



Question 4

List two ways of interacting with people who access the service to monitor and address a change in needs.

Question 5

Which of the following tools can be used to consult people and assess changing needs? Tick all that apply.

- Suggestion boxes
- Surveys
- Handover
- A complaints process
- Policies

1D

Consult and collaborate with other services and networks

Collaboration

An approach that involves people working together to accomplish common goals.

Professional development

Continuing education, training and certification undertaken in the context of a job or career.

Consulting with other services at all levels of your organisation can result in mutually beneficial collaborations.

If you are a community services worker or manage people who are working in this field, you need to consult broadly when developing service programs for the people you support. Engaging with service users and gaining their input into planning is important, however, it is also important to be able to engage with the wider network of community services. Your agency is unlikely to have capacity to meet all the needs everyone you are working with. Being well connected with other organisations and the wider community gives your organisation access to resources that assist in meeting different people's needs.

Boards will often network with members of boards delivering similar services; CEOs and managers usually meet through formal and semi-formal networks to advocate, broker service partnerships and share knowledge. At the worker level there are many ways to connect: through conferences and **professional development** opportunities, professional associations, local planning meetings, shared casework and service partnerships.

Learn about other organisations

As a coordinator, you need to have a comprehensive knowledge of the various services provided by other community services organisations in your area, their target clients, service costs, eligibility of clients and frequency of service delivery. Learning about other organisations and keeping up to date with changes in your industry are important to everyone working in community services.

Methods of maintaining knowledge of other services

- Participating in community services agency networks with professionals from other services
- Attending conferences to receive up-to-date information about models of service delivery
- Subscribing to email lists that share information about developments in community services
- Reading government publications and websites that relate to service provision
- Developing a good working relationship with a representative from your organisation's funding body
- Reading magazines and journals your organisation or agency subscribes to
- Attending professional development and training opportunities
- Keeping a list of service providers and the type of services they offer.



Work with diverse groups

The **diversity** of people with support needs may mean that various organisations are needed within communities to provide specific support.

It is impossible to be an expert in all the ways in which people are diverse and it is therefore important to stay informed about the different specialist groups that support diverse needs. Keeping up to date, establishing effective referral systems and developing partnerships with other service providers is an important extension of the services you deliver.

The following information outlines key areas of diversity linked to agencies that offer specialist support. You can find services in your local area by doing an internet search.

Diversity

A wide range of different personal characteristics, including culture, gender, sexual orientation and ethnicity.

Disability	People with physical and mental disability have peak bodies working to advocate on their behalf. Specialist agencies also offer targeted residential, education and support services.
Gender	Agencies focused on gender have tended to emerge from women's support services – women's health centres, violence against women refuges, sexual assault services and women's information exchanges. Agencies targeting men include men's sheds, men's behavioural change programs and men's support groups. There are also organisations that support transgender people.
Sexual health support	There are an increasing number of support groups and agencies focused on LGBTIQ+ gender diverse groups. Sexual health support is provided by other specialist organisations including family planning and sexual health clinics.
Language	Interpreting, translation, and language support is often provided through multicultural organisations as well as neighbourhood houses and individual cultural support networks.
Culture	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have support networks in every state and territory that provide various services including health and cultural support. There are a variety of other multicultural and culture-specific groups available, sometimes connected with neighbourhood houses or adult education centres.
Age	Age services are focused on all stages of the lifespan. They are often linked to local government and are involved in advocacy and service delivery.
Location	Communities often have neighbourhood houses and health centres which, along with local government, provide support to people living in the local area.



Environment	There are a growing number of organisations working in communities to combat environmental problems and encourage sustainability, working in the areas of biodiversity, natural resource management, recycling and urban reforestation.
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Develop service partnerships

Relationships between agencies can range from informal networking to collaborating on specific projects, to developing formal partnerships. In recent years, both government and philanthropic funders have encouraged organisations to partner with each other when applying for funding. The priority in creating service partnerships is to enhance the service you offer to people in need.

Partnerships can be informal arrangements but will usually require memorandums of understanding or contracts if shared resources are involved.

Here are some examples of situations where service partnerships may be sought.

Shared location	Agencies often partner with similar organisations to share spaces. This improves access for service users and reduces costs.
Tendering	Tenders can be strengthened through partnerships with other agencies by bringing increased capacity and broader skills and knowledge to the bid.
Diverse needs	Partnerships with other agencies facilitate program delivery to service users with specific needs relating to disability, language, sexual preference or age.
Multifaceted problems	Often a service user will need more than one service to meet dual or multiple needs – for example, homelessness and mental health; alcohol and ageing; sexual health and intellectual disability. Service partnerships allow organisations to set up seamless pathways to other services for these people.



Example

Consult and collaborate

There are a range of tools available online to assist with consulting, collaborating and developing partnerships in the not-for-profit sector.

One that has been widely used was developed by VicHealth, a Victorian-based health advocacy and promotion organisation, which considers partnerships an important mechanism for building capacity to promote health, particularly when working with a range of organisations across multiple sectors.

VicHealth explains that for partnerships to be successful they must have a clear purpose, add value to all organisations involved, and be carefully planned and monitored. They have developed a partnership analysis tool that is designed to assist organisations to assess, monitor and maximise the effectiveness of partnerships they enter.

The partnership analysis tool by VicHealth can be accessed at: aspirelr.link/partnerships-analysis-tool

The tool is designed to help organisations:

- understand the various ways collaborations can work and their different purposes
- reflect on the partnerships they have established
- focus on ways to strengthen new and existing partnerships by engaging in discussion about issues and ways forward.



Practice Task 4

Question 1

Describe how to maintain your knowledge of other organisations.

Question 2

List three situations where it could be beneficial to develop a partnership with another agency.

Question 3

Which of the following allow service workers to collaborate with other services and networks? Tick all that apply.

- Webinars
- Local planning meetings
- Shared casework
- Service partnerships
- Board meetings

1E

Evaluate the organisational context

Service plans for individual service users or program plans for multiple service users are all developed within the broader organisational context of the agency.

The plans need to be aligned with relevant government legislation, and industry standards and codes. They also need to be consistent with organisational:

- strategic plans
- policies and procedures
- performance plans
- work health and safety plans
- budgets
- building and resource plans
- risk management plans
- governance frameworks.

Organisational context

When identifying and assessing a person's need for a service, keep in mind the organisational requirements you must follow. You must be aware of and understand your organisation's policies and procedures to be effective in your program planning in the workplace.

Examples of workplace policies and procedures:

- Use designated forms for assessing or recording information.
- Show your identification before proceeding with an interview.
- Telephone a person if you are going to be late for an interview.
- Provide communication aids, such as an interpreter or a communication board, where necessary.
- Ensure the person you are interviewing has an advocate, if required.

Standards

Different community services industry sectors have different obligations and **standards**. The following information explains some of the standards and principles that govern the community services sector. You should consult with your manager to identify further standards specific to your sector.

Standards

In community services, standards are benchmarks or minimum requirements that must be performed in your workplace every day.



Aged Care Quality Standards	<p>Quality of Care Principles set out the responsibilities of providing services in aged care.</p> <p>The Aged Care Quality Standards relate to dignity in choice for consumers regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• planning• personal and clinical care• supports for daily living• guidelines for services in terms of the environment that they provide• obtaining and actioning feedback and complaints• human resources.
National Standards for Disability Services	<p>The National Standards for the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) were developed to ensure clients receive services that are consistent with the requirements of disability legislation.</p> <p>The standards apply to rights, participation and inclusion, individual outcomes, feedback and complaints, service access and service management.</p>
Australian Privacy Principles	<p>The Australian Privacy Principles (APPs), contained in the <i>Privacy Act 1988</i> (Cth), regulate the management of personal information by organisations. Principle 11 is related to the security of personal information. All organisations must protect staff and client personal information from misuse, interference, loss and unauthorised access or disclosure.</p>

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The NDIS is a government funding scheme to provide individuals with disability with support and access to support services. It was designed to assist those who suffer from a disability to be more included into the community. To do this the NDIS provides funding to approved participants for:

- daily personal activities
- transportation to enable participation in the community
- workplace assistance
- therapeutic supports, including behaviour support
- help with household tasks to maintain the home environment
- provision and set up of aids
- home modification
- mobility equipment
- vehicle modifications.

Video: What is the NDIS?

Watch this video to learn more about the NDIS: aspirelr.link/yt-what-is-the-NDIS

Pay particular attention to how the NDIS is delivered across Australia with the help of community partners.



Codes of conduct and codes of ethics

In the community services sector, organisations follow **codes of conduct** and **codes of ethics** that define the values of the organisation and the expectations on workers to uphold the rights and needs of clients.

Whereas a code of conduct outlines specific behaviours that are appropriate in certain situations, a code of ethics is a set of guidelines that is designed to help support ethical decision-making in situations beyond what is documented in a procedure or protocol.

These codes must be compatible with legislation and service standards. Developing a code of conduct gives service providers the opportunity to aim for a level of service that exceeds accepted practice.

Professional groups often develop their own codes of conduct and ethics; for example, the Australian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics 2020: aspirelr.link/aasw-code-of-ethics

Duty of care, negligence and dignity of risk

The concepts of **duty of care**, **negligence** and **dignity of risk** are at the core of service provision in the community services sector.

The principle of duty of care is the obligation to avoid acts or omissions (failures to act) that may foreseeably cause harm to someone in your care. Negligence occurs when duty of care has been breached and people or property are harmed. It is the legal and ethical obligation of all community services workers and supervisors to ensure that people who are using services are not exposed to unnecessary or unreasonable risk.

However, the rights of clients to dignity and choice are rights upheld in legislation and service standards. A worker's adherence to duty of care must also be coupled with the concept of dignity of risk, meaning that people have the right to make choices about their own lives, even when they entail a degree of risk. Community services workers must ensure that clients are aware of and understand any risks they may be taking. They should always assist clients to make informed choices.

Code of conduct

A set of rules that informs employees how to act in a workplace.

Code of ethics

Guiding principles that outline expected ways of behaving or standards of conduct for an individual or organisation.

Duty of care

A moral or legal obligation to ensure the safety and wellbeing of other persons.

Negligence

Failure to take reasonable care with your actions.

Dignity of risk

A person's right to dignity and choice, upheld in legislation and service standards, to ensure that duty of care or safety is not used as a reason to limit a person's freedom of personal choice.



Legislative requirements

Always keep in mind the legislative requirements that all services must adhere to.

Various laws and statutory requirements protect the client and the service provider.

Relevant legislation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Privacy Act 1988</i> (Cth) • <i>Disability Services Act 1986</i> (Cth) • <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> (Cth) • <i>Age Discrimination Act 2004</i> (Cth) • <i>Aged Care Act 1997</i> (Cth) • <i>Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986</i> (Cth) • <i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975</i> (Cth) • <i>Sex Discrimination Act 1984</i> (Cth)

Workers must know which piece of legislation underpins particular areas of their practice. They also need to know where to go to obtain further information about their responsibilities and the organisation’s responsibilities under the legislation. Consider some of the legislative obligations relevant to community services work, as detailed below.

Privacy legislation	<p>The <i>Privacy Act 1988</i> (Cth) and other state- and territory-based privacy legislation is significant to the community services sector because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • privacy and confidentiality are legislative requirements • people have the legal right to access their own medical records (according to the state and territory in which they live) • you have a duty of care to protect a person’s privacy and to ensure that documentation such as case notes or incident reports (which are legal documents) are collected and archived according to your workplace’s policies and procedures, which are guided by legislation.
Freedom of information	<p>The <i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i> (Cth) is significant to the community services sector because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • freedom of information gives people the right to access government documents • when collecting or documenting information, workers should keep in mind that everyone has the legal right to view all that has been written about them • workers have a duty of care to provide clear, factual and accurate information.



<p>Anti-discrimination legislation</p>	<p>Anti-discrimination legislation is significant to the community services sector because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> workplaces must promote equality for everyone, regardless of their age, gender, race, disability or sexual preferences; it is unlawful to discriminate against people on these grounds you have a duty of care to ensure that people have equal access to services and are not discriminated against on the basis of disability, race, gender, age or sexual preference you must provide all people with equal access to services and treat everyone with respect and courtesy.
<p>Work health and safety legislation</p>	<p>The <i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i> (Cth) is significant to the community services sector because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work health and safety legislation ensures a safe working environment it is designed to reduce work-related incidents and illness and their related costs community services workers have a duty of care to ensure they adhere to safe work practices to avoid injury or harm to themselves or others.
<p>Mental health legislation</p>	<p>Each state or territory has a mental health Act that is significant to the community services sector because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> it has been designed to protect the rights of people with mental illness and outline the circumstances in which a person may involuntarily be taken for treatment (when they pose a risk to themselves or others) workers have a duty of care to recognise the signs of acute mental illness and to act to protect the person and others, when necessary.
<p>Criminal laws</p>	<p>Criminal laws in Australia are significant to the community services sector because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> suicide is no longer a criminal act in any state or territory; however, it is a criminal offence for someone to assist a person to suicide workers should always act in the person's best interests, which may require reporting someone who is attempting to assist a person to suicide.

Example

Evaluate the broader organisational context

Legislation, standards, and codes play out in all aspects of service provision – for employees and for people using the services. Here are examples of legislation as they apply in work environments.

Comply with requirements by:

- providing a safe work environment for all staff and volunteers; attending to environmental hazards such as uneven floors or poor lighting
- treating everyone equally regardless of age, race, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or personal background
- informing people with support needs of all appropriate aspects of the service and information about the service provider
- including people with support needs in the planning process
- ensuring people have access to an advocate
- letting people know they have the right to complain if the service does not meet their needs
- keeping service user information confidential and ensuring people have access to their own care plan
- ensuring clients receive quality service.

Practice Task 5

Question 1

Which of the following organisational requirements need to be followed when planning a program? Tick all that apply.

- Informed consent
- Dignity of risk
- Work health and safety plan
- Policies and procedures
- Strategic plan



Question 2

Explain how legislation regarding community services work assists in best practice.

Question 3

Briefly outline how a code of conduct is used in service delivery.



Summary

- Engaging service users is an important part of program planning at both the individual service plan and program level.
- To involve service users in planning it is important to understand and respond to their individual needs as well as the organisational and external barriers to their engagement.
- A consumer engagement plan should include collecting feedback from service users in a variety of ways, analysing the feedback and implementing changes in response to the feedback.
- Community services workers need to collaborate and consult broadly with other agencies to ensure they are able to respond to the multifaceted needs of service users.
- When engaging service users in planning, workers need to be mindful of following organisational policies and procedures.
- All program planning needs to be developed within relevant standards, codes and legislation.



Learning Checkpoint 1

Engage consumers in analysing their service needs

Part A

You are a community services worker working in a youth hostel. The people you work with, the service users, are aged between 16 and 25.

1. List three strategies you may use to engage and consult with the young people you are working with.

2. Explain how you would investigate the service needs of the young people and the supports you would need from all levels of the organisation to do this.



- 3.** Many of the young people at the hostel have alcohol and drug use issues. Identify two ways to consult and collaborate with other services and networks to address the needs of this group.

- 4.** Which of the following are barriers that may prevent your service users from giving feedback? Select all that apply.

- Poor language and literacy skills
- Physical barriers
- Lack of communication tools
- No information on the complaints process
- Finance

- 5.** Explain how anti-discrimination laws and your organisation's code of conduct influence your way of engaging with the young people regarding service provision.



6. Which of the following are ways you could make it easier for the people you support to engage in two-way communication? Select all that apply.

- Hand out brochures
- Get to know your service users
- Make opportunities for regular informal feedback
- Make sure staff are accessible
- Write a letter or send an email

7. Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

a. A complaints process must be established in any organisation delivering community services.	Yes / No
b. Service users, family members, advocates and carers have the right to complain once without losing access to the service or having it reduced.	Yes / No
c. All organisations must have a complaints policy and process that service users can easily follow.	Yes / No
d. Organisations must make sure that users understand what they need to do if they wish to complain.	Yes / No
e. A verbal explanation of the complaints procedure is all that is required.	Yes / No

Part B

Read the case study and answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Johan has been assigned as a case manager to the local neighbourhood house. The service assists immigrants to undertake training in response to their different needs. Initially, training, education and support is given to help them improve their English and support them with the living skills needed to function in Australian society. As people become more proficient in English and living skills the focus moves to assisting them to obtain employment.



Many of the immigrants have come to Australia as refugees and their literacy skills are variable, even in their mother tongue. Their experiences are very varied. Some individuals don't have many years of formal education, often due to political events or natural disasters in their home countries. Due to past life experiences some of the individuals are reticent to answer questions and seek to avoid these situations.

Some of the people hold qualifications from overseas institutions and Johan works to assist these clients to have their qualifications recognised. For all people accessing the service, education will be provided to assist them to obtain work in an area that will provide an income and independence. Initially this may be in a area that is different from that for which they are qualified.

1. Provide two examples of how Johan could engage with the people he is supporting.

2. Number each step from 1 to 5 in the order Johan would follow to assess his client's needs.

	Discuss their work preferences
	Review their education background
	Learn about their skills and knowledge
	Meet with individuals using an interpreter
	Provide written surveys in their language



Topic 2: Develop programs

- 2A Facilitate input into program development
- 2B Consider individual differences in the planning process
- 2C Determine resource requirements
- 2D Develop systems, procedures and evaluation methods
- 2E Document the program



2A Facilitate input into program development

A key aspect of program planning involves consulting stakeholders – both internal and external to the organisation.

Program development involves assessing needs and developing service strategies, then implementing, evaluating, monitoring and reviewing service delivery.

Community services programs are more likely to be successful if they are well planned. There is a large body of knowledge available to assist workers engaging stakeholders, planning resource requirements and applying evaluation methods to programs.

The process of developing programs is written into all aspects of an organisation's operations, from the strategic plan to individual service plans, and engages everyone from the board to service users.

Internal stakeholders

Internal stakeholders are the people involved within the organisation, such as staff and board members.

Sometimes community services workers don't understand the importance of including staff who are not part of direct care, in their planning for and with service users. Staff from finance, human resources and transport can offer a valuable contribution to program planning. They are the people who understand what resources are available to support workers and service users, and the more they understand the context in which resources are being used, the better they can plan to provide them.

Oftentimes, an organisation's board will need to be included in program development planning. This is because the board governs the organisation, signs off strategic plans and budgets, and needs to be kept well informed to operate effectively.

The following list outlines some key internal stakeholders and strategies for engaging them.

The board	Reports, presentations, subcommittee meetings
Management	Reports, presentations, management meetings
Finance	Reports, program planning meetings, budget planning meetings
Human resources	Reports, program planning meetings, recruitment, and staff development planning meetings



Reception staff	Reports, staff meetings, program planning meetings, reviews
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External stakeholders

External stakeholders are those people who are affected in some way by the decisions and actions of the business, but who don't work in the organisation. Engaging funding providers, partner organisations, service users and other community representatives strengthens the service capacity of your own organisation.

If, as a community services worker, you are involved in planning for a new program or reviewing an old program that needs updating, input from external stakeholders is vital.

The following table outlines key external stakeholders and offers strategies for engaging them. Where service-user groups exist, you could engage them by inviting them to speak at meetings, and to participate in strategic planning, and engaging them at conferences and workshops.

Service users	Share service planning, seek feedback on service delivery, ask them to participate in strategic planning, invite them to join committees or to attend the annual general meeting
Partner organisations	Attend network meetings and planning meetings, have a guest speaker at a staff meeting, invite them to attend the annual general meeting
Peak bodies	Engage with workers from peak bodies at conferences and workshops, have them as a guest speaker at staff meetings, invite them to attend the annual general meeting
Funding bodies	Attend briefings by funding bodies, provide reports to them, invite them to attend the annual general meeting

Engaging service-user groups and individuals

Some individual service users may require special consideration when planning a program. It may be because they cannot access public transport, do not speak English or have other communication challenges, or belong to a minority group that does not have representation in the community.

Planning to include these individuals needs to be flexible and responsive to when and where needs arise. If good assessment processes are operating on referral and/or during intake, needs should be recognised and acted upon as part of the organisation's general procedures.

Often service users will have support groups that offer extra assistance, such as advocacy for individuals, awareness training for staff and support for participation in planning processes.

Engage people accessing programs in management processes

When people using the service are engaged right through to management, planning and decision-making is more responsive to people's needs.

Whilst engaging service users in the planning processes at the community worker level is important, it is essential that the engagement occurs at all levels of the organisation. If management processes don't include service-user input, programs may be planned without taking their individual needs into consideration and will likely be less effective.

Management processes

The management processes of an organisation extend from the service worker level right through to the governance that happens at board level. In a well-governed organisation, the board ensures that management processes are guided by sound policies and procedures that are constantly monitored and reviewed. It also monitors the actions taken to address feedback arising from review processes.

The following information identifies ways service-users can be engaged in management processes.

Governance	The board requests regular reports from management that summarise service-user feedback. Some boards create board positions for service-user representation. Service users may also be asked to present directly at a board meeting or as a guest speaker at the annual general meeting.
Strategic planning	Service-user engagement should be a major part of strategic planning, both to collect their input about their needs and comment on the kinds of service delivery required to meet them.
Quality assurance	As part of continuous improvement, organisations survey service users for feedback that will guide improvement.
Management meetings	Managers should report on service-user feedback at their meetings on a regular basis. Managers may meet with service users to resolve disputes. They may also engage service users in discussion about service delivery as part of performance planning for staff.



Develop formal arrangements

Formalising input into management processes from service users requires strong policies and procedures to ensure compliance continues. The following information identifies some ways organisations can formalise input.

Formalising involvement of service users in management processes

- Create positions on the board with clear terms of reference.
- Ensure procedures for strategic planning include consultation with those using the service.
- Develop service planning policies and procedures that ensure people are consulted.
- Include service-user feedback in monthly board reports.
- Make service-user reporting a regular agenda item in management meetings.
- Implement regular review processes to ensure feedback is collected and responded to.
- Build audits of user feedback into the continuous improvement cycle.

Example

Engage people accessing programs

A women's refuge has employed a consultant to assist them to develop their five-year strategic plan. When the consultant suggests involving service users in the planning process, she is advised that it would be difficult because the women who use the service tend not to stay for long and need space and privacy while in the refuge.

The consultant asks if it would be possible to follow up with women who have used the service before to ask them to participate in a focus group. This is agreed and eight women respond positively and attend a focus group.

The board receives a briefing from the consultant about the focus group findings and one of the board members suggests that it would be beneficial to have a service user regularly participating in governance discussions.

The board formally creates two service-user positions and two of the women who attended the focus group accept an invitation to join the board.



Practice Task 6

Question 1

Match each internal stakeholder to what they contribute to the process.

Residential and recreation worker	Provides information about the administration side and whether program changes are viable
Human resource manager	Provides information about funding available to deliver the new program
Manager	Provides information about staffing levels and opportunities
Finance manager	Provides first-hand knowledge related to working with the people.

Question 2

List two stakeholders and explain why they would be involved in program planning.

Question 3

Which of the following are management processes that people using a service could be included in? Tick all that apply.

- Reception duties
- Governance
- Strategic planning
- Quality assurance
- Management meeting



Question 4

List three ways people using a service can be formally included in management processes.

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the student to write their answer to the question.

2B

Consider individual differences in the planning process

Person-centred approach

Providing tailored support for each person and taking time to learn about their individual preferences, needs and goals.

In a **person-centred approach**, the person accessing the service is central to service delivery; their needs, goals and aspirations are the priority. Individual human needs and differences include a complex range of abilities, preferences, and attributes. While individual rights apply equally to all people, their needs and differences can be multifaceted and nuanced.

Community services workers and their managers need to understand the range of individual needs and differences they may be faced with in their work and ensure planning processes are responsive to them.

Awareness training about needs and preferences, along with consultation and engagement with specialist peak bodies that support individual differences, can assist workers to incorporate these considerations into the planning process.

A person-centred approach to care

The service must respond to the whole person and focus on a social model of care rather than a medical model of care. A social model of care considers all factors that influence a person's life, including social, emotional, physical and economic factors, whereas the medical model focuses on the problem or illness.

In a person-centred approach, planning is individualised, based on who that person is and their particular needs and aspirations. The resulting service provides solutions that consistently meet the needs of the individual.

Individual rights

Organisations have a legal obligation to ensure the individual rights of all people using the service are upheld. Community services workers need to understand these rights and integrate them into practice.

Certain rights may be more relevant to community services environments, as described below.

Privacy	Information collected about people using the service must remain confidential, be stored securely and must not be accessed by unauthorised people.
Duty of care	Duty-of-care requirements include collecting information courteously and informing people what has been written about them.
Discrimination	Workers must not record discriminatory or unnecessary information.



Freedom of information

Freedom-of-information requirements should be followed to ensure service users are able to access information held about them.

Multifaceted needs and preferences

People have multifaceted needs and preferences. These can relate to sexuality, gender, physical and mental abilities, addictions, physical health, culture, literacy and numeracy, education, and access to resources.

Community services workers need to be well informed about these needs and preferences and be able to incorporate them into planning.

Strategies for developing good practices that support person-centred care include the following.

Strategies

- Training in awareness of gender, homophobia, culture, and disability
- Use of plain English when speaking and writing
- Consulting peak bodies
- Developing partnerships with organisations that focus on different needs
- Engaging special interest groups in planning
- Accepting advocacy support from special interest groups
- Making the inclusion of multifaceted needs and issues part of the strategic plan.

Integrate internal and external services as required

The community services sector is made up of a huge range of organisations varying in size from a few workers to hundreds.

Often, an organisation is one of a network of agencies delivering the same service – for example, aged care, child welfare or community health. Sometimes organisations specialise and may be the only one delivering a particular service in their region – for example, those that offer **transgender** support, AIDS awareness, or multicultural support.

Community services workers in large organisations need to factor in all the service delivery areas in their own organisation when planning. These can include services such as finance, transport, human resources, and reception.

Moreover, community services workers from both large and small organisations, will need to integrate external services into their planning process so service users can benefit from specialist services and extra support.

Transgender

People who have a gender identity or gender expression that is different from the sex they were assigned at birth.



Internal services

In medium and large community services organisations, service delivery is backed up by an extensive internal service network that supports the workers engaged directly with service users.

Effective service delivery planning integrates these services into the planning process to achieve outcomes that are affordable, fully costed, staffed efficiently and well organised.

Organisations vary as to the breakdown of service areas, but the more common ones are:

- finance
- fleet management
- reception
- human resources
- marketing
- project management.

External services

At the local level, networks are formed for information sharing and exploring partnership opportunities. There are also many professional networks in each state and territory that meet and share information. The focus and structure may vary from network to network, but the overall goal of sharing information to support clients is common to all. Consider the types of networks listed below.

Support and advocacy groups	Support and advocacy groups assist people experiencing the same issue/s – for example, Arthritis Victoria. Part of the support may include providing information and training to service organisations.
Professional associations	People doing the same job form associations – for example, the Australian Community Workers Association.
Service-user groups	Sometimes service users form their own advocacy or peer support groups – for example, Transgender Victoria.
Project groups	Project groups are working groups or committees focused on a particular project. The focus of such groups is usually on current issues such as young people with disabilities in nursing homes, policy changes in social housing, or legislation review.
Consortiums	Consortiums are groups of organisations that develop formal arrangements for working together to share service delivery.



Example

Integrate internal and external services

Youth services in the Barfield region have been meeting for five years under the banner of the BYSN (Barfield Youth Services Network).

The group has been working towards the creation of a one-stop youth service where multiple agencies can be located in the one building. They believe this will benefit the people using their services by improving access, and that by sharing costs and integrating service delivery, money can be saved and funnelled back into programs.

The plan is a product of many years of networking, collaboration and partnership.

The steering committee for the project has finance, human resources and direct service managers from each organisation working with youth workers and young service users to complete the plan.

Practice Task 7

Question 1

Briefly describe the person-centred approach to planning.



Question 2

Which of the following are areas where legislation binds workers to uphold individual rights? Tick all that apply.

- Privacy
- Duty of care
- Discrimination
- Freedom of information
- Funding

Question 3

List three ways that individual needs, preferences and differences can be incorporated in the planning process.

Question 4

List four internal services you would expect to find in a large organisation that would support service workers engaged directly with service users.



Question 5

Which of the following are benefits that can be gained from engaging with external services? Tick all that apply.

- Information
- Referral opportunities
- Less rental fees
- Potential partners
- Sharing of service delivery

2C

Determine resource requirements

When planning a new program, essential things to consider are: what are the costs involved, what are the staffing needs and what other physical resources are required?

While the design for the new service is the central focus, it can't be delivered efficiently if other aspects of business planning are not developed, implemented, and monitored.

Funding bodies, boards and senior management all need to evaluate budgets, human resources strategies and accommodation plans before approving a new project.

Funding frameworks

While an organisation is likely to have supervisors and finance managers supporting the process, it is good for community services workers to understand their funding sources and how funding is managed.

The two main sources of funding for community services are described below.

Government funding

- Government funding can be granted at the federal, state, or local level.
- Since the 1990s, almost all government funding is made available through a competitive tendering process.
- Tenders are advertised and organisations are invited to submit tenders outlining how they would deliver the service and what it would cost.
- Some funding is granted on a fixed-term basis for organisations to deliver a service such as community health or residential care. This kind of funding is ongoing.
- Other funding is one-off and project-based with the funding ceasing at the end of the contract.
- Accountability is rigorous when government funds are involved.

Philanthropic funding

- Philanthropic funding comes from private individuals or companies that provide funds to support particular projects.
- Grants can be delivered by the organisation itself and are often a tax deduction to the donor.
- Community foundations have been developing over the past 15 years, offering philanthropists an organised way to donate without physically managing the grants themselves.
- Funding is usually project-based and time-limited. Organisations need to submit applications to the trusts or foundations to engage their interest.
- Accountability for funding is not usually as rigorous as government funding but is still required.
- Some philanthropists like to stay anonymous, while others prefer to get 'hands-on' with projects.



For more information on finding philanthropic donors, visit: aspirelr.link/seek-funding

Not-for-profit organisations

Not-for-profit organisations put their donations and revenue towards pursuing or advocating for specific social causes.

Organisations in this sector are largely dependent on the following funding options:

- grants
- sponsorship
- private funding
- public fundraising.

For its operations and delivery of services, a not-for-profit organisation relies completely on the funds it has available. For this very reason, it is critical that organisations in this sector research all avenues of support and systems available to ensure that the organisation's vision is realised.

The following table lists the support systems typically available to not-for-profit organisations.

Support systems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government grants • Government-funded training programs for employees and volunteers • Low-cost loans • Financial incentives • Subsidised mentoring programs.

For more information on ensuring financial stability and sustainability as a not-for-profit, visit: aspirelr.link/financial-stability-sustainability

Financial requirements

Understanding financial requirements assists community services workers to be more effective program planners and managers.

There are some simple frameworks to use when assessing financial requirements. The simplest and widest used is an income against expenditure budget. This simple tool can be used to measure financial requirements and monitor financial progress over the life of a program.



The following outline of a basic program budget indicates the most common cost centres to be included. Budgets will vary according to the nature of the program and the type of service being delivered.

School support program budget	
Income	
Grant	\$500,000
Fundraising	\$5,000
Fees	\$20,000
Total income	\$525,000
Expenditure	
Salary and wages	\$350,000
Accommodation	\$30,000
Travel	\$20,000
Infrastructure (phone, gas, electricity, internet, incidentals etc.)	\$100,000
Resources (laptops for service users)	\$25,000
Total expenditure	\$525,000

Video: NDIS Funding simplified

Watch this video to learn more about government funding for the NDIS: aspirelr.link/yt-what-is-the-NDIS

Pay attention to the three different funding categories and what is included under each budget.



Human resources requirements

Getting the right people with the right qualifications who believe in the values and purpose of your organisation can sometimes be difficult. An effective staff recruitment strategy is required for the organisation as a whole, as well as for specific programs.



Here are some strategies to help you identify and manage effective people.

Human resources management strategies

- Be clear and concise when writing position descriptions.
- Make sure job ads clearly communicate who you want.
- Seek advice when planning recruitment strategies.
- Follow effective, accountable selection procedures.
- Provide a good orientation to new staff.
- Develop effective performance enhancement procedures.
- Provide regular opportunities for professional development.
- Celebrate staff achievements.
- Provide career planning advice and support.

For more information about staff recruitment, visit: aspirelr.link/fairwork-staff-recruitment

Physical resource requirements

Physical resource requirements vary greatly according to how established your organisation is and the services you deliver. For example, large, established organisations may be able to add a new program for relatively little extra cost.

Some programs require staff and/or service users to travel, some require complex residential facilities, and others may require just one room. You need to carefully map out activities to identify the physical resources they require.

Here is a list of some of the most common physical resources to factor in when planning a new program.

Physical resources

- An office or meeting space
- Furniture
- Telephones
- Computers
- Internet connection
- Vehicles
- Reception space.



Example

Determine resource requirements

A counselling service has been successful in gaining funds from a philanthropic trust to set up a free counselling service for newly arrived refugees.

The budget they developed when submitting the grant application for the program included funds to employ one extra staff member. A memorandum of understanding has been developed with a multicultural services organisation to rent one of their offices three afternoons a week to deliver the service.

The counselling service needs to advertise for a new counsellor as none of its existing employees have the necessary experience. Most refugees coming to the area are from Sudan, so 'understanding Arabic and the Sudanese culture' is listed in the position description as 'desirable'.

The counselling service invites a worker from the multicultural services organisation to assist with the recruitment.

The funds granted by the trust won't cover social events, which a worker from the multicultural services organisation suggests will be effective in encouraging service users to develop their own support networks.

The board of the counselling service is approached and agrees to fundraise for this extra expenditure so it can be included in the budget.

Practice Task 8

Question 1

Name one of most common funding sources for community service organisations.



Question 2

List two expenditure items you would expect to find in a community services budget.

Question 3

Identify at least three strategies that assist good human resource management.

Question 4

Name two physical resource requirements most new programs will need.



Question 5

List three sources of funding for not-for-profit organisations.

2D

Develop systems, procedures and evaluation methods

Developing and maintaining effective support systems relies on sound policies and procedures to guide them.

Community services workers need to ensure they have good support systems to underpin the planning and delivery of effective services.

These systems ensure safety, financial security, continuous improvement, provision of resources, review and evaluation, and maintenance of standards and equipment.

Policies and procedures need to be in place to guide everything from social media use to security in reception. While community services workers sometimes rail against the bureaucratic approach of developing and following set procedures, most people agree they are needed.

The secret is to engage workers and service users in developing and maintaining policies and procedures.

Support systems

As a community services worker you will rely on many support systems to be able to work effectively with the people you are supporting.

You will need an office to meet in, a phone to be contacted on, a website to introduce your service, social media accounts to promote activity and connect people – the list goes on. Reception staff, and procedures to be followed at that first point of contact, can create a respectful, fair, orderly, predictable and supportive structure. Procedures in relation to reception usually focus on customer service and security.

The more you know about the policies and procedures your organisation has in place to guide these support systems, the better you will be at implementing them.

The following information outlines some typical support systems with a description of what their policies and procedures may cover.

Information technology (IT)

IT policies and procedures guide access and security for:

- email and websites
- shared knowledge systems
- troubleshooting
- equipment maintenance.



Social media	Most organisations use social media and should have procedures to cover such things as content, permissions, risk responses and social media marketing techniques.
Finance	Finance policies and procedures ensure that spending is planned, monitored, and accounted for. Delegations, spending limits and reporting requirements should be covered in these documents along with petty cash use and guidelines for reimbursing expenses.

Develop supporting procedures

If organisations want workers and service users to follow policies and procedures, they need those people to know and support them.

The following strategies can be used to promote engagement when developing new policies and procedures.

Keep people informed	Staff meetings, intranet announcements, newsletters and presentations at program meetings can all be used to inform people about planned changes.
Invite participation	Workers and service users can be invited to participate in planning committees, focus groups, surveys and working groups when developing new support systems.
Obtain feedback	Obtain feedback on possible new approaches and draft plans before implementing a new support system.
Take action	Workers and service users are more likely to stay engaged if they can see that action is taken in response to their suggestions.

Example

Develop support systems

Andre works for a remote drug and alcohol services organisation in the Northern Territory. He is out on the road visiting some young people that were referred to his organisation after a party got out of hand at a local cattle station and a young woman was injured. Andre hasn't had much time to get a background on the young people, so he stops by the side of the road and logs into his network in Alice Springs to read the files he has been sent. When he goes to start his car, it won't turn on. After trying unsuccessfully for five minutes he checks in the glove box to find out what he needs to do to get help. There is a clear set of guidelines for him to follow including out-of-hours phone numbers, the closest town for assistance, the breakdown assistance support details and instructions on how to stay cool when stuck in a car in the desert.



He gets help and is back on the road within two hours. On his way, Andre rings his supervisor, Bec, and asks her to let the group know he will be late. Bec also checks how long he has been driving that day and what time he expects to get home that night. She reminds him of the organisation policy of staying overnight after driving more than 500 km in a day, so she books Andre into a hotel in the next town, and texts him the details.

The meeting with the young people goes well and Andre leaves believing they will adhere to the restrictions placed on them through their diversionary order.

While the day has its setbacks, Andre realises it would have been a lot more difficult without the support systems that were there when he needed them.

Develop and integrate service evaluation methods

When you set clear objectives for a service, it gives you measurable outcomes that can be monitored and reported on. Integrating independent service evaluation into programs is often another requirement of funding bodies. Extra funds are sometimes provided to ensure this is feasible.

Service evaluation methods

Identifying clear objectives, strategies and tasks that are measurable are important steps towards developing appropriate evaluation methods.

Use the SMART acronym to guide your approach to setting and measuring objectives.

- **Specific** – Target and clearly define the specific area you want to improve.
- **Measurable** – Suggest an indicator of progress, quantify it if possible and determine how you will know the goal has been achieved.
- **Attainable** – Agree what the goals should be and keep them achievable in the time frame.
- **Realistic** – Identify what results can realistically be achieved given the available resources, knowledge and time.
- **Timeframe** – Specify when the result can be achieved and make sure there is enough time to achieve the goal, but not too much time.

Integrate feedback into service planning

It is important to gather regular feedback from clients and other stakeholders. For some agencies this is a requirement of their funding agreements.

If feedback is not recorded, analysed and responded to promptly, the process is meaningless. There must also be a clear plan regarding what to do with feedback.

Consider the steps outlined below to make good use of feedback.

Record feedback	Document all feedback you receive. A written record of service-user feedback (whether hard copy or electronic) is a reference that enables organisations to review and reflect on their services. It also shows patterns that can assist you when analysing the feedback.
Analyse feedback	To be responsive, you need to analyse all feedback, decide on a response, and act on it. Complex issues may require time to resolve, and the collaboration of a number of people. For less complex issues, the analysis may be brief and the action obvious. You may need to involve other people, such as health professionals, to help you analyse the information.
Categorise feedback	You need an efficient and ordered way of categorising feedback. For example, the facilitator of a service user-assessment process may provide a comprehensive report to the service, grouping together pieces of feedback that relate to the same issue. This categorisation makes it easier for the service to interpret the feedback and to take the actions needed to respond to it.
Isolate feedback	While it is important to analyse the patterns in service-user feedback, you shouldn't discount feedback that is 'one-off'. Significant and serious feedback may not always show up as a pattern that repeats. It may be that an isolated client survey or phone call from a family member highlights an important issue. If you are not sure how to respond, seek advice.
Involve others	Analysis of feedback should involve more than one person in order to obtain a range of perspectives and avoid any possible conflict of interest. For example, if a client survey shows that half the respondents receiving physiotherapy are unhappy with the delivery of their treatment and the only person analysing the feedback is the manager of allied health services, then the analysis may be biased.



Example

Develop and integrate service evaluation methods

Marieke works in a disability support organisation. She has been asked to assist with planning a program for Irfan, a 14-year-old boy who has recently migrated from Syria. Irfan lost both legs when a bomb exploded on his home.

Irfan needs to be fitted with prosthetic legs and taught how to walk with them. He also needs to attend English classes before he can start attending school in three months' time.

Marieke sets up the program in consultation with Irfan, his aunty, who is his primary carer, the physiotherapist and the ESL teacher. They develop a plan to support Irfan to be ready for school. The objectives they set for the plan are specifically related to Irfan learning to walk. Sessions with the physiotherapist are built in, with review dates each month to measure progress. Irfan is enrolled for individual and group ESL classes and systems are set up to measure which, if either, is more effective.

This is the first time Marieke's organisation has worked with a refugee from Syria and she has set up a system to document the process for later evaluation and planning.

Practice Task 9

Question 1

Briefly describe the purpose of procedures for managing the reception area for a support program development.



Question 2

List two supports or resources that may be important for a community services worker doing home visits.

Question 3

Describe how service objectives should be set to enable effective evaluation at a later date.

Question 4

List the steps to follow when processing feedback from service users.

2E

Document the program

Standard approaches can be used to design programs that are clearly documented and therefore accountable and measurable.

Documents include work plans that identify priorities, timelines and responsibilities, and can be used to monitor and review programs.

The information you collect and store about client service delivery must be relevant and up to date to facilitate the delivery of appropriate services. Documentation varies between organisations.

Program design

As a community services worker you should be part of designing and reviewing programs.

The following simple program design framework demonstrates the steps to follow. Consultation needs to be built into every stage of the program.

After approval has been obtained for the program, it is time to implement it. Part of a successful implementation is establishing continuous improvement processes so that the program is regularly reviewed and updated in response to feedback. In the chart below, the steps followed when designing a program are outlined.

Define purpose	The first step to take when designing a program is to clearly state what is to be achieved and why. Make sure the new program fits within the organisation's strategic plan, including its purpose and priority focus.
Scan environment	Before starting a new program, it is good to review what else is happening that may affect it at local, state and national levels.
Engage internal stakeholders	It is essential that the board approves new programs if they are to be funded and included in the organisation's planning. Finance, human resources, and other key resource areas should also be engaged at the early planning stage.
Engage external stakeholders	Some external stakeholders, such as service users, will be actively involved in the program delivery. They also need to be engaged from the beginning.
Scope the work	Scoping the work involves articulating what service will be delivered, how often, to whom and where.



Develop objectives	Objectives should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-framed.
Draft a work plan	A work plans involves mapping out what will be done and who will be responsible for it, against timelines and performance indicators.
Draft a budget	A budget needs to include all costs including in-kind costs from the organisation.
Develop evaluation	A framework for evaluation needs to be set against the agreed objectives.
Review staffing and resource needs	A recruitment strategy will explore the skills, qualifications and position descriptions of the staff required to deliver the program. Identify resources already available and cost out the extra resources required.
Write up the program plan	The program plan may be a simple expanded work plan or an extensive business plan, depending on the size of the project.
Seek board and key stakeholder approval	Approval includes establishing accountability and reporting frameworks.

Document the work plan

A simple work plan can be used to document the program. The leaders in this case include the chief executive officer (CEO), the program manager (PM) and the project worker (PW).

Tasks	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 5	Who leads	Performance indicator	Resources needed
Identify stakeholders	x					PW	Stakeholders identified	Nil
Conduct scan	x	x				PW		Software
Meet with board		x			x	CEO		Nil
Stakeholder meeting			x		x	PM		Catering



Example

Document the program

A social housing cooperative has received funding to develop a community housing project targeted at female couples wanting to retire into a shared housing situation.

Jacob is the housing worker leading the project planning. He prepares a draft work plan to present to the board for approval. Two of the women from the group are invited to present with him to the board. The plan outlines a two-year time frame with the objective of building six new units. It clearly outlines who is responsible for each stage of the project and has been costed by the finance manager in consultation with builders. The board establishes a reporting process to ensure they are kept up to date with the project.

Practice Task 10

Question 1

Briefly describe why program plans need to be documented.

Question 2

Which of the following are aspects of a program design framework that take place at the beginning of the process? Tick all that apply.

- Start the program and see how it goes
- Use previous objectives
- Scan environment and scope the work
- Engage stakeholders
- Appoint staff



Question 3

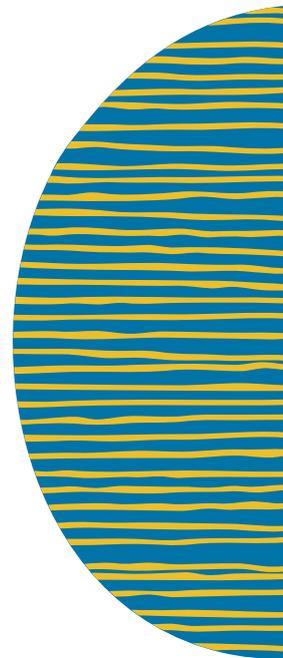
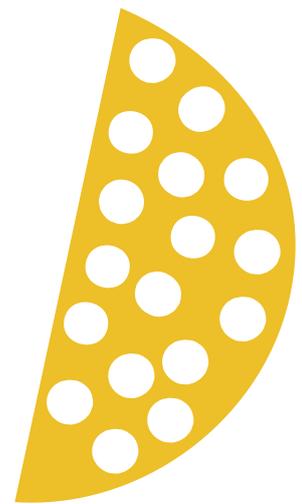
Identify the three main things being mapped in a work plan.

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their answer to the question.



Summary

- Both internal and external stakeholders need to be engaged in program development.
- It is important to formalise service-user engagement at all levels of the program management process. This can be done in a variety of ways including formal positions on committees, regular listing on meeting agendas and inclusion in policies and procedures.
- The planning process needs to incorporate practices that uphold basic human rights. It also needs to factor in people's individual differences, needs and preferences.
- The planning process needs to include internal groups within the organisation, such as finance, reception and human resources, and external groups, such as service users, funding bodies, peak bodies and partner organisations.
- Good program planning needs to get the costs, staffing and resource requirements right. Other service staff should also be consulted when developing budgets and planning staffing needs.
- Programs need to be supported by a range of systems including finance, information technology, transport and human resources.
- Community services workers need to make sure the relevant policies and procedures are followed when engaging support systems.
- Evaluation should be built into the program plan to monitor outcomes against objectives, costs, time frames and service-user feedback.
- Well-designed programs are underpinned by work plans that drive and monitor the program's timelines, staffing, costs, performance and use of resources.





Learning Checkpoint 2

Develop programs

Part A

1. List four of the internal stakeholders you would include when developing a new program.

2. Which of the following are strategies to integrate service evaluation into programs? Tick all that apply.

- Giving free lunch
- Including it in staff performance plans
- Having a filled-in form for review
- Building it into the organisational strategic plan
- Integrating it into quality assurance plans.

3. Which of the following help incorporate the needs and preferences of special user groups in the program planning process? Tick all that apply.

- Consulting peak bodies
- Making buildings accessible
- Using advocates
- Using technical language
- Using plain English



4. List one way service users can contribute to an organisation's strategic plan.

5. What is the difference between human rights and individual differences when considering program planning?

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Gene is a community services worker developing a new transgender support program in a community health service. He has received funding from a philanthropic trust but needs to develop a budget. A local sexual health service is partnering with Gene to deliver the program. He needs to set up an evaluation process for the program and is required to document the outcomes.



1. Identify the internal services Gene should include in the planning.

2. How does philanthropic funding differ from government funding?

3. List three ways human resources may assist Gene when developing his new program.

4. List two external services Gene might engage in the planning.



5. List at least five tasks Gene will need to complete in designing this new program.

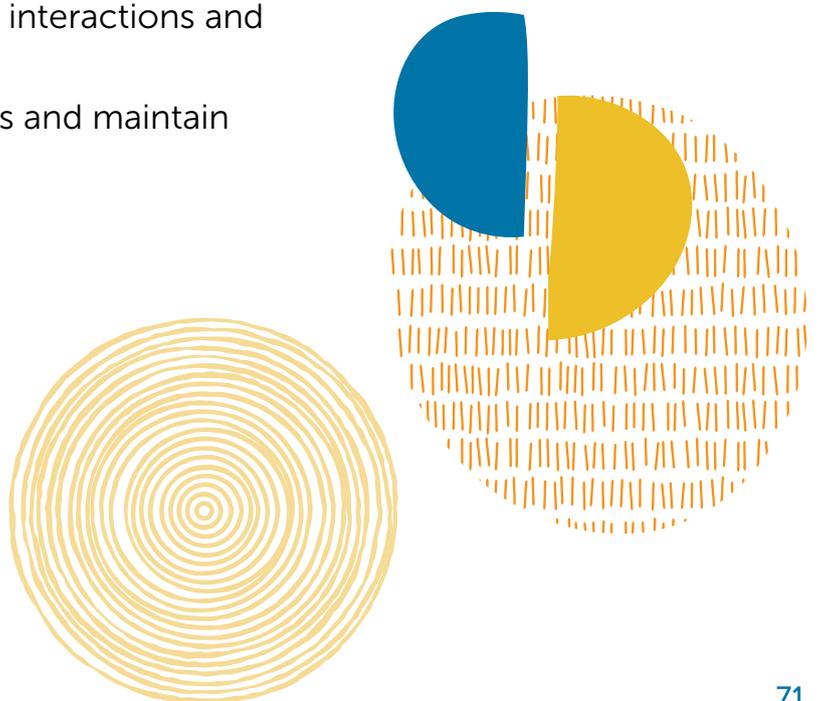
6. What type of document can Gene use to document the program?

7. To use an organisation's support systems effectively, what does Gene need to familiarise himself with?



Topic 3: Implement and monitor programs

- 3A Communicate roles and responsibilities to stakeholders
- 3B Facilitate the provision of training
- 3C Monitor service delivery, user interactions and feedback
- 3D Identify and address problems and maintain documentation



3A Communicate roles and responsibilities to stakeholders

For a program to run smoothly, engage all the relevant stakeholders and clarify everyone's roles and responsibilities.

Once a program has been developed and approved for implementation, take a systematic approach to ensure that objectives are met on time and within budget. These systems need to operate within organisational policies and procedures. Staff and other stakeholders need to be clear about their roles, and their performance needs to be supported and enhanced.

Progress and performance must be monitored regularly with a focus on engaging service users and other key stakeholders in the feedback process. Problems identified from feedback need to be addressed and the whole process must be well documented. Include internal and external stakeholders in the implementation process.

Ultimately, the board is accountable to the funding body and has ultimate responsibility for the successful delivery of the program. Reporting to the board and funding bodies is usually the responsibility of the program manager. Team leaders and direct care workers are responsible for collecting information on the program's progress and reporting to managers.

Responsibility for reporting back to service users and other key stakeholders is shared across all levels of staff.

Roles and responsibilities

The planning, implementation and evaluation of a program requires many people acting in different roles, each with its own responsibilities.

As a community services worker, you should understand where your role fits in the bigger picture and what that means you are responsible for. The person managing the program is responsible for communicating roles and tasks and making sure they are achieved.

Here are some of the key roles that are needed to deliver a program, alongside the typical responsibilities of each role. General governance is the responsibility of the organisation's board.



Program responsibilities of people in different roles

- Senior managers: resourcing and reporting on the program
- Program manager: leadership, appointing staff, developing plans, monitoring, communicating
- Program workers: delivering the program, collecting feedback
- Finance: developing and monitoring the budget, facilitating payments
- Human resources: selecting, training and supporting staff
- Reception: welcoming service users, making appointments, supporting program staff
- Partner organisations: providing services
- Service users: using the service and providing feedback.

Communicate with program workers and service users

Making time at the beginning of a project to ensure roles and responsibilities are clearly understood is worth it in the long run.

Follow the organisation's policies and procedures when recruiting, selecting and managing staff. People need to know what is expected of them as well as the grievance procedures to follow if something goes wrong.

On the ground, program workers and service users may comprise the largest groups. Communication between service users and the people running a program can occur through meetings, feedback tools and reports.

You can communicate with program workers by:

- including communication and reporting responsibilities in position descriptions
- evaluating communication and reporting in performance plans
- documenting communication and reporting responsibilities in work plans
- conducting supervision sessions
- running debriefs and planning meetings
- asking for and monitoring reports.

Communicate with other stakeholders

Across the organisation as well as externally, there are stakeholders that need to be kept informed of program service delivery.

The following table outlines some strategies for communicating with these stakeholders.

The board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports • Presentations • Meetings
-----------	--



Senior managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supervision sessions• Performance• Work plans for program manager
Program manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performance plans• Position descriptions• Supervision sessions• Planning meetings• Reports
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finance reports• Planning meetings
Human resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning meetings• Reports
Reception	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning meetings• Staff meetings
Partner organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Memoranda of understanding• Planning meetings• Reports

Example

Communicate roles and responsibilities

A neighbourhood house has been awarded funding to establish an English language class for newly arrived refugees.

Dave is the program coordinator responsible for setting up the project. He is keen to get roles sorted, as the partner agency will have to be managed carefully to fit the running of the program into the centre's daily schedule. They will provide the teaching and room bookings.

Dave consults with the partner agency to check the roles and responsibilities of the teachers. He contributes to their position descriptions and arranges an orientation for them to ensure they understand the organisational requirements of the neighbourhood house.

He organises a meeting between the two finance managers to set up the payment system. Dave also meets with reception staff and draws up a schedule for fitting the new classes into the timetable. He also talks to the manager about cultural awareness training for staff of the neighbourhood house to prepare them for the new service users.

Finally, Dave invites the boards of both organisations to an afternoon tea with staff and community representatives to launch the program.



Practice Task 11

Question 1

List three key roles needed to implement a new community services program.

Question 2

Identify two responsibilities for each of the following roles – board, manager, and service user.

Question 3

List two strategies that are suitable for communicating with a partner organisation.

3B

Facilitate the provision of training

New programs often require people to learn new skills and knowledge so they can deliver them effectively.

These skills and knowledge requirements may relate to things such as cultural awareness training for program workers, or new support requirement approaches.

Training can involve anyone from the front desk to the boardroom, depending on the roles people will have in the program.

Steps to follow in facilitating training

- Conduct a training needs analysis to map current skills and knowledge against those required for the program.
- Identify skills and knowledge gaps.
- Plan training to fill those gaps.
- Provide training and evaluate it.

Identify training needs

Training needs analysis (TNA)

The process of identifying skills or knowledge gaps in workers and related training needs.

Training specialists use a **training needs analysis (TNA)** to identify skill and knowledge gaps present in an organisation or program.

Wherever possible, source training from an accredited course so the trainee can gain a formally recognised qualification.

If the program is large, program managers should consult with human resources personnel and people experienced in conducting TNAs. They should also engage training experts to assist with mapping the skills and knowledge against current training qualifications.

If the program is more modest, as is often the case in community services, the program manager should still follow the TNA framework and engage assistance if available. The training may be a single professional development session for the program workers, or a workshop for the whole agency. The same principles apply as when implementing an accredited training course.

Here is a framework that can be used for conducting a simple TNA.

1	Identify the new work or changing needs to be addressed.
2	Consult with people who are experienced at doing the work involved.
3	Map the skills and knowledge required to do the work.
4	Link the skills and knowledge to a training qualification, if relevant.



5	Map the current skills and knowledge of those who will be working in the program.
6	Identify gaps between current and required skills.
7	Develop a training program based on addressing skill and knowledge gaps.

For an example training needs analysis template, visit: aspirelr.link/training-needs-analysis

Plan a training program

It is ideal if trainers can be briefed on who they are training and can prepare their materials in response to the individual and their needs. Individual needs can relate to learning styles; physical abilities; language, literacy, and numeracy skills; cultural background; and previous training experience.

Trainers also need to be mindful of the method of delivery. Will it be in a classroom or on the job? How can trainees be encouraged to participate? What resources will be required?

Program planning principles and processes

When planning a training program, principles and processes used in other areas of community services planning may apply, depending on the size of the program.

A well-planned program:

- is inclusive – stakeholders and service users are involved
- involves people who understand the process, and efforts are made to make the process transparent
- supports the strategic plans of an organisation, and has the approval of the board and management
- results in activities that support clear objectives
- is well organised, to avoid wasting time or money
- is implemented following a scan of the environment to assess what else is happening
- considers relevant options and their impacts
- ensures the people involved have the opportunity to learn about the results.



The following guide outlines the basic steps to take when setting up a training program.

1	Assess the learning needs of participants.
2	Make a plan for the training required.
3	Recruit and appoint trainers.
4	Timetable the training to suit stakeholders.
5	Identify and book a training facility.
6	Promote training.
7	Provide training.
8	Acknowledge completion with a celebration and, if relevant, a certificate of achievement.
9	Evaluate training.

Example

Facilitate the provision of training

Felicity is a caseworker with a family care agency. She has been asked to review the training requirements for a new parenting program that is being established for fathers of newborn babies.

In reviewing the program plan she identifies a need for staff to understand the basic care requirements of newborn babies. After consulting with staff, she finds that half of them have had children themselves and a few caseworkers have been foster care workers with newborns.

Felicity reviews accredited training options but finds they are not relevant for their staff, who already have diplomas in community services work.

She contacts the local maternal and child health nurse and together they develop a one-day workshop that will accommodate all workers using a peer training model. Felicity discusses the plan with two of the senior case workers who also agree to assist with its delivery.

After the training is successfully delivered, Felicity organises for certificates of achievement to be presented to the participants.



Practice Task 12

Question 1

List five steps you would expect to find in a training needs analysis framework.

Question 2

Which of the following are needs a trainer may need to take into account when planning a training program? Tick all that apply.

- Physical abilities
- The learning style of participants
- Dietary requirements
- Language and literacy levels
- Cultural factors

Question 3

Identify two program planning principles.

3C

Monitor service delivery, user interactions and feedback

Usually, the aspects of the program to be measured and monitored are articulated in the program plan. We monitor for a variety of reasons, the most important being to determine whether we are doing what we said we would do. Other questions we ask in monitoring are:

- Is the program having the effect we planned?
- Are we achieving the outcomes we are being funded to deliver?
- Is our spending on target?
- Are we keeping within agreed timelines?
- Are the users of the service happy with what we are doing?

It is important to have clear, measurable objectives stated in the program plan, with performance indicators attached to them that will monitor progress. It is equally important to have a detailed, achievable budget that can be monitored to ensure spending stays on track.

Define objectives

Objectives are developed from goals. They are the quantitative or measurable statements that define how you are going to fulfil the goal. For example, if the goal is: 'to support our young people to achieve success at school', the objective may be: 'by providing a homework club three nights a week'.

When developing objectives, there are three basic questions that need to be addressed.

What are the management requirements?	This relates to the expectations from funding bodies, boards, and senior management about what the project will achieve and how it will run. It also includes organisational requirements as expressed through the organisation's policies and procedures.
What information will we collect and how will we collect and analyse it?	This is the what, when, where, how and who part of the objective-setting process. Objectives need to be action statements from which performance indicators can be developed.
What are the constraints?	The constraints are what might get in the way of achieving a goal. Constraints could be lack of resources, geographical issues, difficulty in collecting data or lack of qualified staff to undertake analysis of data.



Develop budgetary frameworks

Budgetary frameworks are usually developed during the process of applying for funding, if the application is successful, they become the budget that is used to monitor income and spending for the program.

Budgets need to accommodate a range of factors, and it is advisable to seek assistance when developing them. Budgets are action plans that guide how money is spent and are vital in community services where funding and budgets are usually tight, and money needs to be carefully spent and accounted for.

Factors to consider in budget planning

- What do we want to achieve with the money?
- What alternative revenue sources are available?
- Public versus philanthropic funding
- Fundraising
- Setting revenue goals
- Ensuring reliability of the funding source
- Can the project be achieved within funding expectations?
- When should the budget be prepared?
- How much is needed for staffing?
- What other costs can we expect?
- Is the organisation contributing anything in kind?
- How will we monitor income and spending?
- Is the purpose of the funding clear or restricted?

The monitoring process

Once objectives have been set and the budget worked out, you need to establish the monitoring process. To start the process you need to ask, what do we want or need to know? How will we collect and analyse the data?

You need to know how the program is progressing against the objectives that have been set for service delivery and expenditure.



Here are some questions that will assist in setting up the monitoring process.

The monitoring process	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are you going to measure and how will you set up the process? • Can you easily develop performance indicators from objectives? • Are performance indicators measurable? • How will you know if service users are happy? • How will you know if policies and procedures are being followed? • How will you know how much money you have spent and how much is left? • Will the money last until the end of the project? • How will you report on monitoring to key stakeholders? • Who will analyse the data and how? • How will you respond to feedback?

In short, the monitoring process follows these stages.

1	Performance indicators are developed to measure activity outcomes against objectives.
2	Data collection and reporting procedures are developed to test performance indicators.
3	Data is analysed and results are reported to the planning group.
4	Adjustments are made to the program as required and monitoring continues.

Example

Monitor service delivery

Louise is a program manager setting up a new project to support young women at risk of dropping out of school.

Louise works with the finance manager to develop a budget that lists income and expenditure, with projections to the end of the year. The finance department provides her with monthly reports showing income and expenditure to date against the budget. Louise uses this, along with her quarterly statistics on service delivery, to report to the board.

Here is a sample from the program plan she has developed to guide ongoing monitoring.



Objective	Provide homework clubs
Performance target	Three nights a week with 6–12 people attending
Who is responsible	Teacher
Resources required	Extra staffing hours in the budget
1st quarter update	Operated 3 nights; average 4–7 attending
2nd quarter update	
3rd quarter update	
4th quarter update	

Use feedback and interactions in ongoing monitoring

Ongoing monitoring involves measuring and analysing service delivery using a well-planned and documented framework. It also requires procedures to ensure that monitoring processes are being done and responded to.

Sometimes workers establish excellent program plans with well-developed monitoring processes; however, once the program starts, everyone is so focused on program delivery that they forget the documenting and monitoring process.

While organisations are often very keen to provide excellent services to their users, they often don't follow through with seeking and acting on feedback.

The board and management need to emphasise the importance of service-user feedback and ensure that workers are resourced to be able to make it happen. Boards and management also need to insist on reports summarising feedback and ensure that the feedback is acted upon.

User interaction and feedback

It can be helpful to map all the points of contact a service user may have with the organisation and check to see if these points of contact allow them to provide feedback.

Points of contact will vary depending on your organisation and the sort of service it delivers. Consider the following information.



Reception	<p>Reception is often the first point of contact for a new service user and may be where they experience the most frustration trying to make an appointment or waiting for someone to see them.</p> <p>Reception workers can chat informally to gather feedback. Suggestion boxes placed near reception can encourage people to provide feedback, and emailed surveys can be automatically sent out after appointments.</p> <p>Having a complaints procedure made available for service users when they are not happy can alleviate tension. Service-user surveys or focus groups should include reception as one of the services reviewed.</p>
Case or project worker	<p>Service user feedback on case workers can be very complex. In some circumstances, service users are not there voluntarily and may be angry about the situation they are in.</p> <p>Case workers can chat informally to service users to gather feedback; they can also include questions about satisfaction with the program into the service users' formal interviews.</p> <p>Sometimes it is easier for service users to give feedback to an independent party and/or in a group situation.</p>
Transport and facilities	<p>When surveying service users for feedback it is important to factor in location and accessibility of the service as well as the standard of the facilities being used.</p>

Ongoing monitoring

If the organisation you work for has a strong culture of continuous improvement, it will be relatively easy to integrate systems for monitoring your program. Procedures that can assist with ongoing monitoring include the following:

- Integrating your program into quality assurance procedures
- Making service-user feedback an agenda item at staff meetings
- Getting your program integrated into the strategic plan
- Making monitoring part of performance plans for managers and workers
- Including service feedback in monthly reports to management and the board
- Including service-user feedback in the annual report
- Including 'failure to seek feedback' as a risk in the risk-management plan
- Including service-user feedback when creating professional development plans
- Including service-user feedback in newsletters and on your website
- Using social media to promote and report on service-user feedback



Example

User interactions, feedback and ongoing monitoring

Marianne is a team leader in an aged care service. Following feedback from the board she has been asked to investigate how to integrate resident (service user) feedback into their regular monitoring processes.

Marianne starts by reviewing the current monitoring procedures that are used in the organisation to maintain standards. She identifies the ways in which information is collected and how it is reported on.

She also consults widely with residents and staff for their input.

Her final report maps a range of strategies that ensure service-user feedback is integrated into regular monitoring. These include:

- putting it on the agenda for staff meetings
- including it as an agenda item in handover meetings
- building it into individual staff performance plans
- integrating it into monthly reports to management and the board
- including it as a section on the website
- including it in the annual report as part of continuous improvement
- monitoring it through quality assurance audits.

Practice Task 13

Question 1

Which of the following questions need to be asked when developing objectives? Tick all that apply.

- Who uses the service?
- What is the local competition?
- What are the management requirements?
- What information will we collect and how will we collect and analyse it?
- What are the constraints?



Question 2

Suggest at least three questions that should be asked when monitoring a budget and program resourcing.

Question 3

List four questions that should guide the monitoring process.

Question 4

Which service areas are service users likely to have the most contact with? Tick all that apply.

- Finance manager
- Human resources personnel
- Reception staff
- Case workers
- Board members



Question 5

Identify one way service users can be encouraged to provide feedback at reception.

Question 6

List four strategies that can be used to integrate service-user feedback into ongoing monitoring.

3D

Identify and address problems and maintain documentation

While it is important to acknowledge and celebrate the good feedback, it is crucial to address any problems that arise and work together to resolve them.

Sometimes problems arise from organisational procedures not suiting a service user's preference; for example, a person may prefer a male or female worker but the procedures don't allow for choice or change of worker.

In other situations, the service doesn't offer what the service user really needs and it may be appropriate to refer them to another program.

In a continuously improving organisation, procedures should be reviewed regularly so they remain responsive to user needs. Flexibility should exist for one-off responses to procedural or program changes.

Identify service-user problems

By using a person-centred approach, you keep the client at the centre of service delivery. This means identifying, reporting and resolving service-user problems is a priority.

Knowing the person and their individual hopes and goals is essential. All people need respect, dignity, privacy and choice. Other needs and preferences of people accessing services may change, however, as they age, find and lose jobs, meet new partners, improve their health and need new challenges, or experience declining health and lose capacity. Community services workers must respond to the current needs of the person they are working with. They must also ensure that the service the person is receiving meets their needs.

Here are some key tasks that will assist you to identify service-user problems.

Monitor people's changing needs	A community services worker must be aware of their service users' changing needs. This can be achieved through informal chats and by observing the person, their family or significant others. Workers should be alert for communications, events and incident reports that may indicate a person's condition is worsening or that their behaviour has changed. They should also monitor the fit between the program and the person's needs, and adjust the program if necessary.
Review people's plans	Workers need to factor in review dates when writing plans. They should not wait for formal reviews to check that individual plans are still relevant. Checking-in should become a component of each contact and some formal reviews should be built in as part of program evaluation.



Take a user-friendly approach

Simple user-friendly surveys written in plain English (or translated, if necessary) should be used to collect feedback from people who are receiving services. Methods used to collect feedback need to suit the service users' abilities, language and literacy skills and age, and be culturally and emotionally safe.

Address service-user problems in accordance with organisational procedures

Once it has been identified that changes need to be made, they should happen as quickly as possible.

Remember that community services workers' duty of care is to provide appropriate care and support at all times. How you do this depends on the organisation you are working for and its procedures. You may have to organise a meeting with your manager or another professional to identify what needs to be done to resolve the situation. When you have identified a possible solution, discuss it with the service user before taking action. Sometimes changing plans will incur extra costs or require changes to worker routines. Approval is required from all key stakeholders before taking action.

Here are some strategies that may assist when responding to individual service-user feedback.

Possible solutions to feedback from service users

- Alter appointment times or locations
- Provide better support for the worker delivering the service
- Change workers
- Change activities
- Provide assistance with transport
- Integrate cultural requirements
- Provide information in plain English
- Improve the waiting area
- Be more age responsive
- Use technology for better efficiency
- Provide support with technology
- Expand service provision
- Allow the service user more input into decision-making
- Refer the person to another service.

For an example of organisational procedures for addressing service user problems, as well as feedback and compliments, visit: aspirelr.link/act-feedback-complaints

Video: Can you handle complaints?

Watch this video about identifying and addressing service-user problems: aspirelr.link/yt-handle-complaints

Pay particular attention to the importance of documenting problems and monitoring response actions.

**Example****Identify and address service-user problems**

Alan has been attending behaviour management sessions at a counselling service for three months. During an informal chat with his case worker, he says he thinks he would get more out of the sessions if he had other men to talk with who shared the same issues. The service he currently attends only provides individual counselling, but the local community health centre provides men's behaviour management group sessions.

Alan is attending counselling sessions as part of a diversionary order from court and his counselling fees are paid for through program funding. The community health centre men's behaviour program charges a small fee that may create a barrier to Alan attending. The counsellor reports on the situation to her supervisor. After discussions with the finance department, it is agreed that the service will pay for Alan to attend the community health session from the program's special resource funding, which has some unallocated funds in it. This will enable Alan to attend both the individual counselling and the group program.

Maintain documentation related to program and service delivery**Community service organisations have policies and procedures that detail how and when program and service delivery information is to be documented.**

Documentation is required to support both program planning and individual service planning.

Simple, clear documentation that is developed in consultation with service users is very helpful in supporting planning and reporting activities. Keeping documentation adequate, yet to a minimum, ensures it meets requirements while maximising efficiency.



Completing documentation is often a community services worker’s least favourite part of their job, however. It can become a burden and many organisations struggle with being compliant and keeping workers motivated to stay on top of it.

The following table details why information needs to be accurately documented.

Why is it crucial to keep good documentation in community services work?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure funding compliance • To meet organisational requirements • To provide a written record that can be consulted if any issues arise • To summarise agreements • To articulate a plan • To map progress and monitor activity and outcomes • To measure the effectiveness of an activity or service.

Program documentation

When developing program documentation, it sometimes helps to identify who ‘owns’ and is responsible for implementing and maintaining it.

Here are some examples of common documents and who is responsible for them.

The constitution	The constitution or company rules belong to the board and they are responsible for ensuring the organisation is compliant with them.
The strategic plan	The strategic plan also belongs to the board, though creating it is usually delegated to senior management.
The budget	Once again, the board owns the organisational budget but delegates its implementation to senior management. Program budgets can be delegated to and owned by program managers in consultation with the finance manager.
Program plans	Program plans usually belong to the program manager who reports on them to senior management and the board.
Staff performance plans	Performance plans are usually shared by the human resources manager and the program manager but should be delegated to the staff member who is responsible for implementation.

Service delivery documentation

Information that is collected and stored about service users must be relevant and up to date in order to facilitate the delivery of appropriate services.

Documentation varies between organisations.

Documentation types include:

- Referral, intake, and assessment forms
- Service-user profiles
- Case notes
- Care plans and service delivery plans
- Communication books for health professionals, family members and significant others
- Medication documentation
- Incident or injury forms and WorkCover forms
- Feedback forms, surveys and questionnaires.

Example

Maintain documentation

Kaylene lives in a hostel where Angela is the team leader. Kaylene is able to shower herself and receives limited support from staff to complete her activities of daily living. Today when a personal care worker enters Kaylene's room, she finds Kaylene crying on the floor of her ensuite bathroom. Kaylene's knee is swollen and red. When the worker goes to help Kaylene up, Kaylene lashes out, hits the worker in the face and leaves her with a cut lip.

When Kaylene has calmed down, Angela speaks with her and asks her what happened. She says that as she was getting out of the shower, she slipped. Angela makes sure Kaylene is feeling okay and then together with the personal care worker, they go to the office to complete the relevant documentation, which includes:

- an incident report detailing the injuries to Kaylene's knee and the worker's face
- a WorkCover report regarding the worker's injury and the treatment given
- a hazard report requesting a review of the floor and shower area in Kaylene's bathroom
- a progress note in Kaylene's file objectively detailing the incident so that patterns, such as regular falls and aggressive behaviour, can be noted.



Practice Task 14

Question 1

Which of the following are ways of identifying service-user problems? Tick all that apply.

- Assumptions
- A compliment
- Informal chats
- Formal reviews
- Simple feedback sheets

Question 2

List four strategies that may be needed to address service-user problems.

Question 3

Describe why organisational procedures are important in situations where a service user's needs are not being met.



Question 4

List four reasons for maintaining program documentation.

Question 5

Briefly outline who 'owns' the organisational strategic plan.

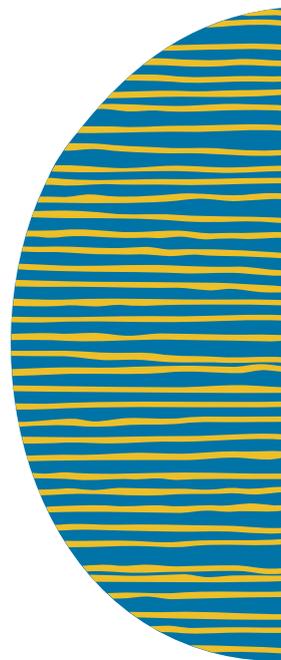
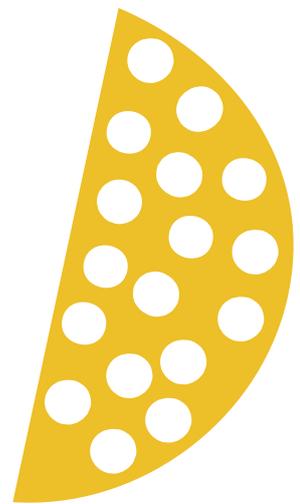
Question 6

Identify five documents used in service delivery.



Summary

- Roles and responsibilities need to be clearly articulated and communicated to ensure smooth program delivery and avoid role confusion.
- New programs often require staff to train in new skills or knowledge areas. A training needs analysis identifies skill and knowledge gaps and the training required to fill them.
- Setting measurable objectives and a balanced budget provides a good framework for monitoring service delivery and expenditure.
- While organisations may be committed to involving service users, they often fall short in making changes based on their feedback. It is essential to integrate service-user feedback into policies and procedures to ensure the best care and support is provided.
- Once service-user problems are identified, they need to be acted on quickly, in alignment with organisational procedures. Sometimes, feedback results in procedures being reviewed and updated.
- Many different kinds of documentation need to be completed. Although this may feel like a chore, it is a requirement of a responsive, efficient and compliant workplace.





Learning Checkpoint 3

Implement and monitor programs

Part A

1. Briefly outline whose role it is to give feedback to service users.

2. List at least five steps you would follow to facilitate training for service workers.



3. Briefly outline why you would undertake a training needs analysis when introducing a new program.

4. Briefly describe what the 'objectives' are in a training plan and how they can be used in monitoring.

5. Briefly outline how a budget can be used in monitoring service delivery.



6. Which of the following are ways to ensure ongoing monitoring of service-user feedback? Tick all that apply.

- Integrating feedback monitoring into policies and procedures
- Building it into quality assurance and performance planning
- Using a 7-day cycle to provide feedback
- Having spot checks to see if there is feedback
- Including user feedback in the annual report

7. Provide an example of whose responsibility it is to communicate roles and tasks involved in a program.

8. Which of the following statements regarding program planning are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

a. During program planning various relevant options and their impacts are considered.	Yes / No
b. Program planning involves people who understand the process.	Yes / No
c. Program planning results in activities that support clear objectives.	Yes / No
d. Only managers are involved in program planning.	Yes / No
e. The program needs to be implemented before the environment has been scanned.	Yes / No



Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

James is a team leader in a youth support organisation. A recent service-user survey identified dissatisfaction with the facilities used for a weekly games competition that is currently held in a room at the back of the two-storey building. James has also just become aware that one of the staff is helping participants carry a wheelchair up the stairs so one of the young women can attend the event. The staff member in question has recently taken a day off because of a bad back.

1. Identify the needs James must respond to.

2. Provide at least two examples of how James can respond to the needs he has identified.



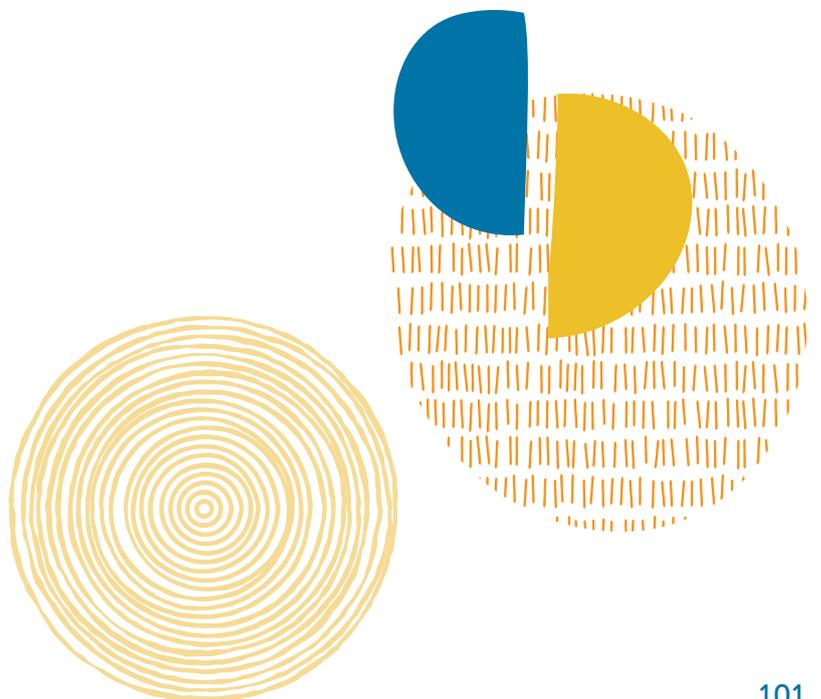
3. Provide three examples of documentation James will need to complete.



Topic 4: Evaluate programs

4A Assess the capacity of programs to meet objectives

4B Evaluate feedback and modify programs as needed



4A

Assess the capacity of programs to meet objectives

Conducting a program evaluation is a way of systematically collecting data so you can answer questions about and measure the effectiveness of a program.

The data collected depends on the questions asked and the things you need to measure in order to determine whether you have been successful in meeting your objectives.

It's important to establish the evaluation process at the beginning of the program. This ensures that aspects of service delivery are designed to be measurable and relate to the agreed-upon objectives of the program.

Feedback needs to be included from all key stakeholders and if an **action research approach** is used, the program can be monitored and modified in an ongoing cycle.

The capacity of a program to meet its stated objectives is influenced by a range of factors. Most importantly, you need to have the right resources and the right plan to achieve what you are funded to do.

Capacity can be assessed across many different variables, including resources, time, skills, knowledge, funding and management. You need to make sure you are measuring the right things to assess the capacity of the program to meet the objectives you have set.

Action research approach

A way of creating change in which actions are taken following critical reflection on information gathered.

Factors to consider when assessing capacity:

- Are the objectives clear?
- How well do the planned activities match what is to be achieved?
- Can we measure what we are doing?
- Do we have enough staff and all the required resources?
- Do staff have the required skills and knowledge/can we train staff if needed?
- Have we budgeted for everything we need?
- Can we monitor spending?
- Do we have systems to continue service-user engagement?
- Have we consulted widely and included all stakeholders?
- Has the board approved the project?
- Are our time frames realistic?
- Do we have an evaluation framework, and can we conduct the evaluation?



Assess capacity in relation to objectives and staffing

To assess capacity, you need to be able answer questions regarding various factors that affect a program's capability to meet objectives and be adequately staffed.

You need to take action to measure and assess these factors. Here are actions you can take to gain a clearer understanding of the capacity of programs to meet set objectives.

Factors affecting capacity	Assessing capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are objectives clear? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check that objectives are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do planned activities match what is to be achieved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the outcomes of activities and assess if they will help achieve objectives.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we measure what we are doing? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do performance indicators relate to the activity: how many, what date, where, etc.?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we have enough staff? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantify workloads and measure what outputs can be expected.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do staff have required skills and knowledge? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a training needs analysis.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we train staff if this is needed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check funding and capacity to train staff.

Assess capacity in relation to finance and resources

Monitoring finances and resource usage helps measure a program's capacity to meet objectives. Reports, records and templates that track finances and resources may also provide you with the information you need.

Factors affecting finance and resources capacity	Assessing capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we budgeted for everything we need? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare with budget templates that give you examples of standard costs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we monitor spending? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check if the finance department can provide reports.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we have all the resources we need? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare with similar programs to review resources requirements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the program location match purpose? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit the location and review it in relation to activities.



Assess capacity in relation to consultation and evaluation

In community services, the principles of continuous improvement are embedded in many organisational processes. This makes consultation and evaluation essential.

Principles of continuous improvement require that service provision be focused on the needs of service users, and that it be planned, implemented and monitored with provision for collecting feedback on the effectiveness of the program. This information can be used to improve activities as the program progresses.

There are several checks you can make to assess capacity in these areas.

Factors affecting capacity to consult and evaluate	Assessing capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we engaged service users in the planning? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check that service-user feedback has been included.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we have systems to continue service-user engagement? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify engagement processes and include them in the program plan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we consulted widely and included all stakeholders? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek evidence of broader consultation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the board approved the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check for board approval with senior management.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are our time frames realistic? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a work plan to map activities against time.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we have an evaluation framework? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check for evidence of an evaluation framework.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we have the capacity to conduct the evaluation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify who will evaluate and how.

Meet objectives

Key performance indicators (KPIs)
A set of quantifiable measurements used to gauge performance.

To be successful, a program must meet its objectives. Measuring achievement against objectives requires sound key performance indicators.

Here is an example of matching performance indicators to objectives.



Objective: To reduce the level of reoffending by young men facing their first criminal charges		
Activity	Performance indicators	Who will monitor?
Provide education support through peers as tutors	Number of men attending	Tutors
	Number of sessions attended	Tutors
	Impact on school attendance	Teacher
	Feedback re. attitude to school	Teacher

Video: Setting KPIs for not-for-profit organisations

Watch this video about setting KPIs for non-for-profit organisations:
aspirelr.link/yt-kpis-not-for-profit

Pay attention to the two key processes involved: identifying the KPIs and measuring the KPIs.



Example

Assess capacity to meet objectives

Peter and Mark are community services workers in a meeting with management to discuss the new 'Fix a Bike' program that is starting at their neighbourhood house the following week.

They are concerned that the funding involves the strict requirement to evaluate the program against its objectives, but to date, no plan has been developed to ensure the evaluation will occur. They are also concerned that they don't have enough bikes for the children to work on.

They discuss the objectives of the program, which are linked to raising children's self-esteem by providing them with old bikes and helping them to do them up and take them home. Mark asks how they will know if working on the bikes has raised their self-esteem. Peter says in another project he worked on they linked the outcome to school attendance. It is agreed that that would be a good performance indicator to link to the objectives.

After the meeting Mark is charged with developing a plan that outlines performance indicators for each objective and Peter plans to review the resource plan with the finance manager and project worker to make sure they have sourced enough bikes to meet projected demand.



Practice Task 15

Question 1

Which of the following factors may affect a program's capacity to meet objectives?
Tick all that apply.

- Clear objectives
- SMART objectives
- Insufficient staff
- Insufficient resources
- New premises

Question 2

Provide one strategy to address insufficient staffing levels and resources.

Question 3

Suggest what can be used to measure achievement against objectives.



Question 4

Identify one principle of continuous improvement.

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their answer to the question.

4 B Evaluate feedback and modify programs as needed

When seeking feedback as part of an evaluation process, the processes for collecting information must be accessible for all service users.

Feedback needs to be treated confidentially and all documentation must be stored safely and securely, according to the requirements of privacy legislation. Permission needs to be sought to use feedback from stakeholders and the processes used to collect data need to be transparent and respectful.

Strategies for improving accessibility of feedback mechanisms

The people who use or benefit from your service will have a range of needs and backgrounds. Some will have the necessary language, literacy, and cognitive abilities to complete a written survey; others may have language or communication difficulties and require alternative processes for providing feedback.

For feedback to be representative, it must be accessible to all services users.

Options to ensure feedback mechanisms are accessible

- Suggestion forms and feedback forms should be written in plain English and translated into a range of languages and formats, if required.
- Information about the availability of independent advocates should be readily available to service users, and their families or significant others.
- Ensure there are easy-to-use procedures in the service for booking a sign language or spoken-language interpreter.
- Provide support to people who use augmentative and alternative communication systems, such as communication boards, so they can participate in feedback forums.
- Ensure there are clear policies and practices that promote a person's right to complain without any fear of negative consequences.
- Use inclusive approaches to gathering information and seeking feedback.

Evaluate feedback

To evaluate feedback, you need to know the desired outcome of the activity – these are your program objectives and KPIs.

Evaluating feedback is simpler when you know your objectives and KPIs. It means that feedback can be compared and measured in a consistent manner.

Next, you need to consider the source of the feedback. For various reasons, certain individuals or people in particular situations may be less critical than you need them to be in order to get the feedback needed to improve programs and services. You may need to follow up on feedback evaluations to get useful information.

You also need to consider the environment when evaluating feedback. Negative feedback may be influenced by external or environmental reasons. For example, if a service-user is asked to give feedback by someone they see as an authority figure, they may feel pressured and stressed, resulting in simplistic feedback that doesn't reflect their true views. Stressful or noisy environments can also negatively impact feedback results.

Question and discuss the reasoning behind feedback comments. This can be the most informative part of the evaluation. By asking participants for examples and suggestions as to how the organisation can perform better, the feedback evaluation becomes constructive. If you can't discuss comments with the person, ask yourself why the comment might have been made. This may lead to new thoughts or ideas that you hadn't previously considered.

Report feedback

Your organisation will have policies and processes for reporting feedback internally; specifically, who needs access to the feedback. For example, an annual summary of service-user feedback may be reported to the management board or a senior management committee, while staff may be given a summary of feedback at team meetings.

To be transparent and accountable, an organisation may also develop a mechanism for summarising feedback for service users and other people who have contributed.

The feedback summary may be in the form of a specific report, an article in a regular newsletter or a section in the annual report. Transparent reporting of feedback demonstrates a commitment to analysing and following up service-user feedback and can reassure people that their concerns and opinions are valued.

Feedback evaluation also needs to be shared through reporting and presentations to boards, funding bodies, partners and other stakeholders.

For more information on how to report to boards, visit: aspirelr.link/board-report-template

Example

Seek and evaluate feedback

Mark works for a neighbourhood house and has just completed an evaluation of the 'Fix a Bike' program that has been operating at the house for the past six months. It has been a great success with 50 children involved in reconditioning bikes. Seventy per cent of these have already shown improved attendance at school.

The children (who are the main service users) have had a party during which they all got to say one thing they thought was good about the program and one thing they would like to improve. Mark used a bike-related circling game as the structure for offering their comments.

Mark organises a BBQ at the house and invites board members, the mayor of the local council who provided the funds, the children and their parents, school teachers and project workers. He presents a video evaluation made during the party and distributes a one-page summary of outcomes related to objectives.

Modify programs to meet changing requirements

Establishing good processes to obtain feedback and making changes or adjustments to programs in response to feedback is an important part of delivering community services.

Feedback and monitoring usually provides information that is both positive and negative.

Positive feedback gives cause for celebration and confirms that the program is doing something right! Positive feedback can form the basis for new ways of doing things. Sometimes it is appropriate to share findings with others through reports, publications or presentations at conferences.

Negative feedback can also be a positive, because it gives the organisation the opportunity to improve on the service being delivered. In extreme cases, programs may be cancelled if they are not achieving objectives or providing the services that users require. Most of the time, however, negative feedback allows you to modify the program or service delivery and improve it so future feedback is positive.

Modifications always need to fit within policy and budgetary guidelines unless more funds can be found, or policies changed. When planning or modifying programs, you need to understand the principles of risk, and regulatory and sustainability mechanisms.



Change requirements

Sometimes minor changes may be made to the way a service is delivered to improve it for service users. For example, users may request programs to be offered at different times or on different days, or for the referral process to be simplified. Such minor changes require little effort from the service, while making programs more accessible to users. Daily and monthly reviews can catalyse necessary changes and improvements in service provision, as outlined below.

<p>Daily reviews</p>	<p>It is critical to respond promptly if services are not meeting service-user needs. Feedback should be routinely gathered from informal conversations, information in communication books, progress notes, telephone discussions with family members, observation and information passed on by other service providers.</p> <p>As soon as you become aware that a service is not meeting a person's needs, inform your supervisor and discuss how to remedy the situation. When gathering feedback, make sure you note any changes or issues that have arisen, especially if they have occurred more than once, and note any other factors that may have led to the change.</p>
<p>Monthly reviews</p>	<p>Don't wait until the yearly planning period to undertake more formal reviews processes. The way reviews are undertaken depends on the organisation. For example, there may be structured, formal team meetings conducted weekly, or case conferences with health professionals and other service providers. These ensure the client's progress is discussed in relation to their needs and rights, in the context of the service's capacity to continue.</p> <p>The outcome of these meetings depends on the situation, i.e., if the service is no longer meeting needs and should be discontinued, if small adjustments can be made, or if a person's needs have changed and they require a different service.</p>
<p>Evaluations</p>	<p>More-detailed evaluations of programs may lead to significant changes, such as recruiting new staff, requests for greater funding, changes of location, training for workers, partnerships with other providers and completely new programs.</p>

Modify budgets

Budgets are used to plan and monitor income and expenditure. They help shape what's possible for a program to achieve by assessing how much money can be obtained and what it can be used for in terms of staffing and other expenditure.

Budgets are usually set at the beginning of a program or the start of the financial year. A budget is an important accounting tool and must incorporate good accounting principles in the way it is developed and managed. There are also many legal compliance issues that need to be met by companies and associations in relation to how income and public funding is managed.



For these reasons, it is always wise for community services workers to seek advice when developing and managing budgets. Your organisation may have a finance manager or a treasurer; both should be able to assist with developing budgets.

Modifications can be made to budgets with approval from management, the board or funding bodies. This usually involves moving funds that aren't going to be spent from one cost centre to another.

Risk, regulation and sustainability

When introducing new programs or modifying existing ones, it is important to link planning and changes into ongoing systems within the organisation that monitor risk, ensure sustainability and comply with regulations.

Failure to manage risk can harm service users and employees, damage the organisation's reputation, and jeopardise their accreditation and future funding opportunities.

The following information provides examples of what is involved with these processes and how they fit into organisational practice, policies and procedures.

Risk	Community services organisations should have risk assessment procedures that assess likely risks and their level of importance. They should also have a risk plan that monitors how the organisation responds to risks when they occur and acts proactively to decrease the chance of them occurring. When developing a new program, risks should be identified as part of the planning process and integrated into the organisation's risk assessment policies and procedures and management plan.
Sustainability	Sustainability relates to the long-term future of programs. Organisations usually include sustainability as part of their financial planning. When developing new programs workers need to check financial viability in consultation with the finance department and other senior managers. Viability is about assessing income and expenditure over time as well as assessing whether there will be an ongoing need for the program. Viability can be affected by availability of qualified staff and alignment with the future direction of the organisation.
Regulation	Compliance with legal requirements, codes of practice and organisational standards are usually monitored by management and are part of quality assurance. Organisations often need to audit service delivery as part of their accreditation requirements. New programs need to be audited to make sure they comply with the standards maintained across the organisation and should be included in the organisation's quality assurance or continuous improvement plans.

For more information about business risks and risk management, visit: aspirelr.link/risk-assessment-planning



Example

Modify programs

Mark has completed his evaluation of the neighbourhood house 'Fix a Bike' project and presented his report to the board and the local council that provided the funds. The house has received funds to continue the program, but a number of suggested modifications have arisen from the evaluation, and these need to be acted on.

The modifications include finding a new location so more children can participate; changing the time of the snack break so that children have something to eat before they start work on the bikes rather than after; translating the information kit (which is supplied with the bike the children get to take home) into languages other than English; and moving unspent funds in the travel part of the budget into the purchases category, so more bikes can be bought.

Practice Task 16

Question 1

Which of the following factors make the evaluation process more accessible to service users? Tick all that apply.

- Assigning an advocate
- Confusing the service user with information about complaints
- Providing communication aids if needed
- Using inclusive procedures to gather information
- Utilising suggestion forms and feedback mechanisms

Question 2

List one way of sharing feedback from a feedback evaluation.



Question 3

Identify two stakeholders that should be included in the feedback evaluation process.

Question 4

Describe two ways of evaluating feedback.

Question 5

Suggest how often service delivery should be reviewed to seek feedback from users.

**Question 6**

In your role as a community services worker, can you just change things you think need changing in a program? Explain your reasoning.

Question 7

Which of the following explain why budgets shouldn't be modified without consultation? Tick all that apply.

- Only the CEO can modify the budget
- It will trigger an audit
- There are legal requirements for managing public funds
- It may change the viability of the program
- The bank will need to be notified

Question 8

Briefly outline how you can ensure that risk, regulation and sustainability are considered when planning a new program.



Summary

- All program objectives need to be achievable and outcomes need to be measurable.
- Assessing the capacity of a program to meet objectives should occur at the outset of a program.
- Capacity can relate to staffing, measurable objectives, realistic budgets, location and performance indicators that will assist with measuring outcomes.
- The processes used to seek and evaluate feedback need to be accessible for all service users and other stakeholders.
- Feedback needs to be analysed and reported on.
- Some modifications that relate to individual service delivery can be actioned quickly, but most need to be processed and approved to ensure they are compliant with policy and budget requirements.



Learning Checkpoint 4

Evaluate programs

Part A

1. List three ways to seek feedback from a wide range of service users and stakeholders.

2. Which of the following resources in an organisation can help you measure a program's capacity? Tick all that apply.

- Reception
- Finance
- Human resources
- Senior management
- Students

3. Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

a. You can measure staffing requirements for a program by quantifying the workload.	Yes / No
b. You can identify skills gaps for staff by doing a training needs analysis.	Yes / No
c. A performance indicator is a goal or mission statement.	Yes / No
d. Feedback is not required for areas already earmarked for continuous improvement.	Yes / No
e. Service provision is focused on the needs of service users.	Yes / No



4. Suggest at least three things you need to consider when evaluating feedback.

Part B

Read the case study and answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Aiofe works in child protection, running a program for women and children who are experiencing family and intimate partner violence. The manager of the program is currently assessing the safety of service users and staff following an incident where a partner broke into the facility, threatened a staff member, and tried to abduct a child. The police told management that the partner had a long history of drug abuse and violence. The board wants to ensure that estranged partners are not accepted into the service. Management had collaborated with another service providing alcohol and drug support and focusing on the wellbeing of men. An agreement is in place by which the male partner can receive a referral by his GP, the police, or as a direct referral by the individual.

Although Aiofe tries not to make appointments for women and children when there is reduced staffing or security, there have been two recent occasions where the ex-partner followed the woman and child into the service. Luckily, following the previous incident, a duress button has been installed that sends a signal to the police station without the person knowing. An additional recommendation was also implemented whereby the public reception area is isolated from the remainder of the facility and only a person with swipe card access can enter. Unfortunately, due to the confrontation and verbal abuse, the women who are using the program have reported feeling very unsafe.



1. List three modifications to the program that the service could make.

2. Which of the following actions could reduce the risk of violence against service users? Tick all that apply.

- Send a referral to an appropriate service for the male partner
- Ensure the male partner cannot gain access to the women and children at the facility
- Threaten the perpetrator with the police
- Find a different room to meet the perpetrator in

3. Explain one regulatory reason why the organisation should seek to manage risks in this situation.



- 4.** If further funds are needed to make modifications to the service, provide an example of how they might be sourced.



Glossary

Action research approach

A way of creating change in which actions are taken following critical reflection on information gathered.

Barriers

Factor/s in a person's environment that, through their absence or presence, limit functioning and create disability.

Code of conduct

A set of rules that informs employees how to act in a workplace.

Code of ethics

Guiding principles that outline expected ways of behaving or standards of conduct for an individual or organisation.

Collaboration

An approach that involves people working together to accomplish common goals.

Consumer engagement

An active process whereby a person who accesses a service is involved in decision-making.

Culture

The social behaviour and norms found in human societies, which are influenced by race, religion, economic status, family life, health, educational or governmental system of their members.

Dignity of risk

A person's right to dignity and choice, upheld in legislation and service standards, to ensure that duty of care or safety is not used as a reason to limit a person's freedom of personal choice.

Disability

A long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment that may hinder a person's full and effective participation in society.

Diversity

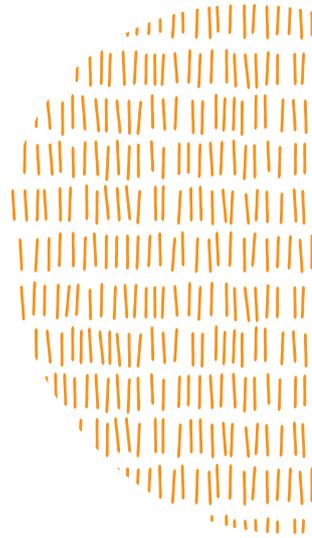
A wide range of different personal characteristics, including culture, gender, sexual orientation and ethnicity.

Duty of care

A moral or legal obligation to ensure the safety and wellbeing of other persons.

Gender identity

A person's internal experience and naming of their gender, which can either correspond to, or be different from, the sex they were assigned at birth.



Governance

The system or processes by which an organisation is controlled and operates, and its mechanisms of accountability.

Impairment

A diminished ability or loss of function.

Key performance indicators (KPIs)

A set of quantifiable measurements used to gauge performance.

Monitoring

Observing and checking the progress or quality of something over a period of time.

Negligence

Failure to take reasonable care with your actions.

Person-centred approach

Providing tailored support for each person and taking time to learn about their individual preferences, needs and goals.

Professional development

Continuing education, training and certification undertaken in the context of a job or career.

Service users

Individuals who are accessing support from a service.

Standards

In community services, standards are benchmarks or minimum requirements that must be performed in your workplace every day.

Strategy

A plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim.

Strength-based practice

An outcome-focused way of working that emphasises a person's personal strengths as well as their social and community networks.

Training needs analysis (TNA)

The process of identifying skills or knowledge gaps in workers and related training needs.

Transgender

People who have a gender identity or gender expression that is different from the sex they were assigned at birth.