

CHCMGT001

Develop, implement
and review quality
framework



CHCMGT001

Develop, implement and review quality framework

Release 2

Learner Guide

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CHCMGT001 Develop, implement and review quality framework, 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 *CHCMGT001 Develop, implement and review quality framework*, 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



Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
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
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 Develop a framework for quality service delivery	1A Establish quality service standards through consultation and benchmarking	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1B Develop strategies to ensure the delivery of high-quality services	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1C Identify and address issues that impact on high-quality service delivery	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1D Identify opportunities for continuous improvement	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1E Plan and ensure the involvement of all parties in quality improvement processes	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident



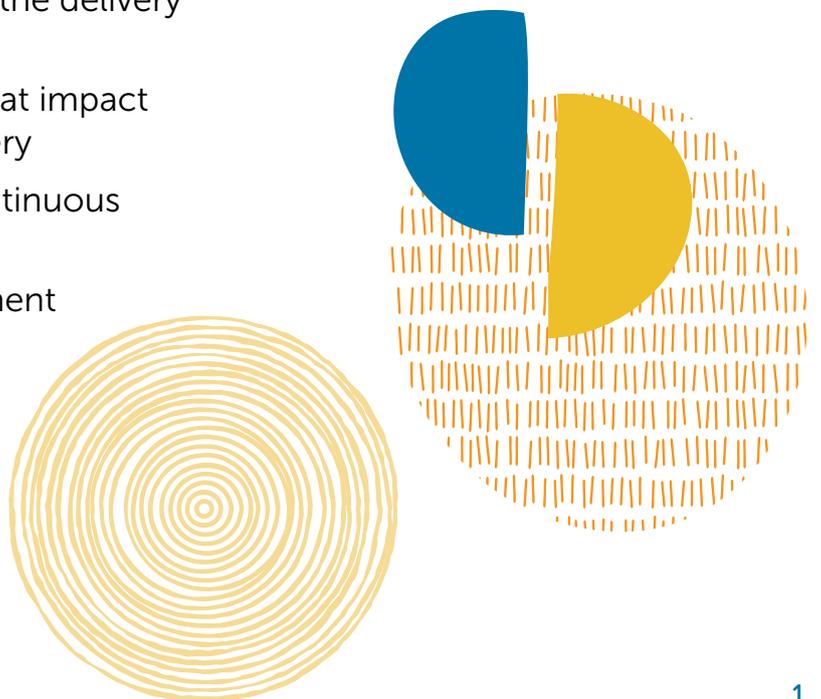
Topic	Key outcome	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 2 Monitor and review service delivery against quality framework	2A Monitor and review service delivery and strategies for addressing barriers	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2B Update procedures to reflect good practice	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2C Use feedback mechanisms to involve service users in the review process	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2D Investigate and document the effects of services on clients	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2E Provide clients and stakeholders with results of service reviews	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 3 Plan and implement revised strategies to improve outcomes	3A Use review findings to identify threats to quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3B Respond to, investigate and use complaints to improve outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3C Design and implement a plan to improve quality and share information with relevant parties	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 4 Ensure the continuous improvement of service standards	4A Ensure revised service standards incorporate stakeholder expectations	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	4B Establish procedures to check that appropriate practice is carried out	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	4C Regularly promote, model and demonstrate good practice	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident





Topic 1: Develop a framework for quality service delivery

- 1A Establish quality service standards through consultation and benchmarking
- 1B Develop strategies to ensure the delivery of high-quality services
- 1C Identify and address issues that impact on high-quality service delivery
- 1D Identify opportunities for continuous improvement
- 1E Plan and ensure the involvement of all parties in quality improvement processes



1A

Establish quality service standards through consultation and benchmarking

Safe, accessible and effective health and community services are fundamentally important to the wellbeing of individuals, families, communities and broader society.

Service standards help to ensure the quality of supports provided by health and community services organisations. Establishing quality service standards for a service or program involves two key processes:

- Consultation with stakeholders
- Benchmarking

Frameworks for quality service delivery

Many organisations and sectors have quality frameworks which provide a set of expectations to ensure service delivery is of a consistently high-quality.

A framework for quality service delivery is an overview of an organisation's overall approach to delivering quality services. Quality frameworks typically incorporate principles that outline what is required by an organisation or a sector to improve or maintain quality services.

Organisational quality frameworks are typically linked to the national and state/territory quality frameworks that health and community services sectors are required to follow.

Here are some examples of national and state/territory quality frameworks:

Alcohol and Other Drugs services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Quality Framework for Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services• South Australian Specialist Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Service Delivery Framework
Child protection and out-of-home care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Human Services Quality Framework (Qld)¹• The Community Services Quality Governance Framework (Vic)²
Disability services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Quality and Safeguarding Framework• NSW Quality Framework for Disability Services



Homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness National Quality Framework (currently under consultation) • The ASES Policy Framework: Implementing a new quality framework for specialist homelessness services in NSW
Primary health care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Safety and Quality Framework for Health Care • National Framework for Continuous Quality Improvement in Primary Health Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People 2018-2023 – aspirelr.link-naccho-primary-health-care • Safety and Quality Framework 2020–23 (Tas)

¹ Applies to a range of human services providers in Queensland, including organisations delivering child protection placement services: <https://www.cyjma.qld.gov.au/about-us/our-department/funding-grants-investment/human-services-quality-framework>

² Applies to child protection, child and family services, disability services, housing and homelessness, family violence and community based health services.

Example

Establish quality service standards through consultation and benchmarking*

GoWell is a national non-profit, community-based mental health service that promotes mental health and supports adults with mental illness.

The organisation provides a range of psychosocial supports to adults with mental illness including in-home and community support, housing and support services, and social and recreational activities.

The organisation promotes mental health by providing information about mental illness on their website and running a yearly themed campaign related to mental wellness.

GoWell's framework for quality service delivery includes:

- committees that oversee quality, safety and continuous improvement
- a quality plan outlining activities and outcomes for quality improvement
- a quality framework outlining the organisation's approach to achieving high-quality service delivery
- a quality improvement register which is used to record site-specific service activities.

* This example is based on the process undertaken by Mind Australia to develop a comprehensive quality framework. The process is described at: <https://www.qip.com.au/mind-australia/>

Guidelines and standards

Standards provide workers with an indication of what is required from them. Guidelines provide direction for actions or behaviour. Many industries have guidelines and standards, established by external bodies such as industry associations, they must adhere to. Here are some examples:

Equity

When everyone is treated fairly, according to their needs.

	Construction	The National Construction Code (NCC) is the technical standard that must be met when new building work is being undertaken.
	Education	The Australian Curriculum sets out the expectations around what Australian children and youth should be taught and was designed to improve the quality, equity and transparency of the education system.
	Financial services	The Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct outline the standards that financial services professionals must meet and the sanctions applied to those who breach those standards.
	Retail	A range of mandatory standards are relevant to the retail industry including standards relating to labelling, such as care labelling on clothing and ingredients in cosmetics; or packaging and product safety, such as children's toys, blinds and curtains.
	Telecommunication	Industry standards such as the Telecommunications (Consumer Complaints Handling) Industry Standard incorporate the rules outlined in the Telecommunications Act 1997 (Cth)

Sources: <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/about-the-australian-curriculum/>; <https://www.fsc.org.au/resources/fsc-standards-and-guidance-notes/standards>; <https://www.nra.net.au/topics/product-safety-standards/>; <https://www.productsafety.gov.au/product-safety-laws/safety-standards-bans/mandatory-standards>

Health and community services standards and guidelines

Just as with other industries, the Australian health and community services sectors have standards and guidelines, some of which apply nationally while others only apply to a specific state or territory.

Some examples of national standards and guidelines for the health and community services sectors in Australia are shown in the table below.

Some of these standards apply to multiple sectors. For example, the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES) are relevant to all community services organisations and especially to small- to medium-sized organisations.



Similarly, the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards apply across the alcohol and other drugs sector, mental health services and primary health care sectors.

Sector		Examples of Australian standards and guidelines
	Aged care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aged Care Quality Standards (Quality Standards): aspirelr.link/acq-standards Preventing Falls and Harm from Falls in Older People: Best Practice Guidelines for Residential Aged Care Facilities Preventing Falls and Harm from Falls in Older People: Best Practice Guidelines for Australian Community Care
	Community services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES): aspirelr.link/ases
	Child protection and out-of-home care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National standards for out-of-home care: aspirelr.link/national-standards-out-of-home-care
	Disability services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Standards for Disability Services: aspirelr.link/nsds NDIS Practice Standards: aspirelr.link/ndis-practice-standards
	Employment services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment Services Code of Practice: aspirelr.link/employment-services-code-practice
	Family and domestic violence services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Standards of Practice Manual for Services against Sexual Violence (Third Edition): aspirelr.link/nasasv-practice-manual
	Mental health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Standards for Mental Health Services (NSMHS) National Safety and Quality Health Services Standards User Guide for Health Services Providing Care for People with Mental Health Issues Principles and guidelines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health (Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists) Guidelines: Mandatory notifications about registered health practitioners (AHPRA)



Sector		Examples of Australian standards and guidelines
	Primary health care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards National Safety and Quality Primary and Community Healthcare Standards: aspirelr.link/primary-community-health-care Clinical Care Standards: aspirelr.link/clinical-care-standards

Quality service standards

In health and community services settings, quality service standards are used to inform clients about the level of service they should expect. These standards also establish a basis for measuring and monitoring organisational performance.

Consulting with stakeholders is essential during the process of developing quality service standards.

Stakeholders who could be involved in service standards consultations include:
• Service users
• Services users' families and carers
• Frontline workers
• Managers and team leaders
• Community members
• Community representatives; for example, Elders
• Other health and community organisations providing services in the community
• Advocacy groups
• Peak bodies

A range of techniques could be used to consult with stakeholders, including:

- focus groups
- public forums
- meetings and workshops
- webinars
- online polls.

When consulting with a broad range of stakeholders it is essential to use a variety of methods for communication. This both meets and acknowledges the diverse needs, preferences, knowledge and skills of stakeholders, regardless of their status or qualifications.



It is beneficial to use active listening skills during the consultation process to encourage engagement and participation during focus groups and other face-to-face consultation processes. Active listening also helps establish a relaxed tone during consultations.

Active listening involves making a conscious effort to hear what another person is saying. When someone is actively listening, they are not distracted by what is going on around them.



Source: <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/writingcentre/sites/default/files/docs/learningguide-activelistingening.pdf>

Benchmarking

In the workplace, **benchmarking** is a process that involves comparing the methods, procedures and/or performance of an organisation to an appropriate comparison. In this case, the comparison is either industry standards or quality frameworks.

There are a range of different types of benchmarking including internal benchmarking, which involves the comparison of departments within an organisation, and functional benchmarking, which involves the process of comparing an organisation to other organisations that do not operate in the same industry.

There are five steps involved in any benchmarking process:

Benchmarking

A process that involves measuring an organisation's methods, procedures and/or performance against an appropriate comparison.



1. Preparation	Determining what to benchmark and who or what to benchmark against: <ul style="list-style-type: none">You might be benchmarking client satisfaction, for example. You can benchmark against:<ul style="list-style-type: none">another team within your organisationa similar organisation to yoursan industry standarda national benchmark.If you are benchmarking against another team or organisation, you will need to ensure the team or organisation is able and willing to share relevant data with you so you can compare results.
2. Comparison	Collecting data and comparing results: <ul style="list-style-type: none">This step involves collecting data about your benchmark, such as the percentage of clients satisfied with a service, and comparing it to whoever or whatever you are benchmarking against.
3. Investigation	Identification of practices or processes that result in superior performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Where another team or organisation is achieving superior results, you will need to identify what they are doing to achieve those superior results.
4. Implementation	Adapting or adopting practices or processes that result in superior performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none">This step involves implementing the practices or processes that were found to lead to superior performance.
5. Evaluation	Monitoring new practices to ensure continuous improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Evaluate the progress made and make any necessary adjustments.

Sources: <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/benchmarking-in-health-care>; https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/evaluation-options/benchmarks_standards; <https://www.tascosslibrary.org.au/how-to/set-benchmark-outcomes-indicator>

Benchmarking is common in the health care sector but less common in community services. The Tasmanian Council of Social Services notes that in a community services setting, the focus is less on ‘superior performance’ and more on which teams or organisations are doing ‘really good work’.

For more information about benchmarking in community services see: aspirelr.link/benchmark-outcomes-indicator



Practice Task 1

Question 1

List the names of two national quality frameworks relevant to the health and community services sectors in Australia.

Question 2

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

a. The Human Services Quality Framework is a state quality framework.	Yes / No
b. The Safety and Quality Framework 2020–23 is a quality framework that is used in Western Australia.	Yes / No
c. Industry standards provide workers with an indication of what is required, whereas guidelines provide direction for actions or behaviour.	Yes / No
d. The Australian National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards apply to mental health services.	Yes / No

Question 3

List three groups of stakeholders an organisation might consult when it is developing quality service standards.



Question 4

Explain what benchmarking means and provide a workplace example.

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

1B

Develop strategies to ensure the delivery of high-quality services

A range of strategies are used by organisations to ensure the delivery of high-quality services.

The concepts of good and best practice are central to the delivery of high-quality services.

People's understanding of the term *best practice* will differ depending on their professional background and workplace setting. However, most commonly, best practice is understood as a practice that is most effective at delivering a particular outcome.

Support good practice standards

To support good practice standards, it is important to understand the difference between best practice and good practice.

Best practices typically have at least some of the following characteristics:

- They produce superior results.
- They are clearly new or innovative.
- They are recognised as best practice in the public domain and/or by industry experts.
- They have received external awards.

Whereas best practice is the most effective practice, **good practice** is positive or desirable. Good practice is better than average practice and serves the purpose for which it is intended.

Knowing where to find information about best and good industry practices becomes integral to delivering quality services. This is because best practices and good practices will change over time as more is learnt about the best way to deliver services.

Here are a few examples of information about best practices and good practices:

Best practice
Using the best skills and ideas available at the time to do a task.

Good practice
Positive or desirable practice which is better than average and serves the purpose for which it is intended.



Type of organisation	Organisation	Industry/sector
Peak bodies for health and community services	Early Childhood Intervention Australia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> aspirelr.link/eciavic-practical-resources 	Early childhood intervention
	National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> aspirelr.link/naccho-resources 	Aboriginal health
Research and advocacy organisations	Australian Institute of Family Studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> aspirelr.link/aifs-practice-guides aspirelr.link/aifs-policy-practice 	Community services (including child protection)
	Cochrane Collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> aspirelr.link/cochrane 	Health
	Campbell Collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> aspirelr.link/campbell-collaboration 	Various including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crime and Justice Disability Social Welfare
	Emerging Minds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> aspirelr.link/emerging-minds 	Child mental health (0-12 years)
	The Royal Children’s Hospital Melbourne <ul style="list-style-type: none"> aspirelr.link/rch-policy-brief 	Child health
Government departments and services	Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> aspirelr.link/nsqhs-standards 	Health (including aged care)
Knowledge translation organisations and Centres of Excellence	Centre for Evidence and Implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> aspirelr.link/ceiglobal 	Community services
	SAX Institute <ul style="list-style-type: none"> aspirelr.link/sax-institute-knowledge-exchange 	Health
	Social Care Institute of Excellence (UK) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> aspirelr.link/scie 	Community services
	The Centre of Best Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> aspirelr.link/cbpatsisp 	Mental health (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)

Knowledge translation
The process of gathering, summarising and disseminating information that is easy for audiences to comprehend.



Type of organisation	Organisation	Industry/sector
Academic journals	British Medical Journal (BMJ) Best Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> aspirelr.link/bmj-best-practice 	Health
	Australian Social Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> aspirelr.link/aasw 	Social work

Holistic and person-centred support

Holistic and person-centred support is an essential aspect of high-quality service provision in health and community services.

Holistic and **person-centred** support places the client at the centre of service delivery and involves a consideration of the whole person, rather than just a specific illness or a problem.

A service that provides holistic and person-centred support looks after the physical, emotional, psychological, social, economic, environmental, spiritual and financial needs of clients and allows them to lead and direct the services they use.

The principles of holistic and person-centred support are as follows:

<p>Respecting individuality, difference, diversity and ability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding out what matters to people and providing support that is responsive to individual needs
<p>Focusing on the whole person, rather than their perceived problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising that individuals are more than the sum of their problems and acknowledging the different aspects of a person's life
<p>Working with respect, compassion and empathy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening to and acknowledging people, showing concern for people, and attempting to see things from another person's perspective
<p>Collaborating with others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building collaborative relationships with clients, carers and other services to provide the best possible service
<p>Empowering the person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising that individuals are experts on their own lives, as well as sharing power and decision-making
<p>Being led by the person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing outcomes based on what matters and is meaningful to a person and respecting their choices

Holistic
 Concerned with the whole body and mind as one system.

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

Source: <https://www.qualityhealthcare.com.au/post/2019/09/17/what-is-person-centred-support>



Video: Person-centred care

This video explains the meaning of person-centred care within a health setting: aspirelr.link/yt-person-centred-care-meaning

Pay particular attention to the benefits of person-centred care on the person and workers.



Legal and ethical considerations applied in organisations

Every organisation, regardless of which sector it belongs to, needs to consider legal and ethical factors when planning and providing services.

However, legal and ethical considerations are especially important to the work of the health and community services sectors. This is because these services are often dealing with people who are making complex decisions relating to critical aspects of their or their loved ones' lives, such as their health and long-term care.

Organisations have legal responsibilities towards clients which are set out in Commonwealth and state/territory legislation. The requirement for services to meet these legal responsibilities helps ensure service quality and protects clients' rights and interests. Commonwealth legislation applies to the whole of Australia, whereas state/territory legislation only applies to the state or territory it is specific to.

Ethical considerations help to ensure health and community services organisations operate in a fair and equitable way, respecting individuals' rights and needs regardless of their background, identity or life circumstances.

Whereas legal standards are set by law, ethical standards do not always have a legal basis. Some professionals in the health and community services sectors such as nurses, occupational therapists and community workers have their own Code of Ethics, developed by a peak body.

For more information about Community Workers Code of Ethics see:

aspirelr.link/self-assessment-tools

Here are some examples of legal and ethical considerations relevant to the planning and delivery of services in the health and community services sectors:

Discrimination

The act of excluding or treating a person differently based solely on an attribute such as disability, age, gender, race or sexual orientation.

Discrimination

- To discriminate means to treat a person or group of people unfairly based on their background or identity.
- Australia's federal anti-discrimination laws state that it is unlawful to discriminate against someone based on a range of characteristics including age, disability, race, nationality, sex and sexual orientation.



<p>Discrimination (cont.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ethical principles that underpin many health and community services professions and organisations are overtly anti-discriminatory. • For example, principles such as respect for diversity, fairness and inclusion challenge the attitudes and behaviours that drive discriminatory practices. • Read more details about Australia’s discrimination legislation here: aspirelr.link/humanrights-legislation
<p>Privacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privacy is a fundamental human and moral right. The right to privacy protects people from interference and intrusion and allows them control over who can see or use information about them. • The <i>Privacy Act 1988</i> (Cth) outlines the legal requirements of agencies and organisations for handling personal information, including how information is collected, used, disclosed and stored. • Read more about Australia’s Privacy Principles here: aspirelr.link/oaic-aus-privacy-principles
<p>Confidentiality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidentiality is a principle that involves not sharing information about a person with others. • Confidentiality restricts an individual or organisation from using, storing and disclosing information about a person that is outside the scope (purpose) for which the information was collected. • Professionals have an ethical duty to keep personal and sensitive information confidential when it is provided to them by a client during a professional relationship.
<p>Disclosure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclosure is the act of sharing or releasing private or personal information with another person, or making that information public. • Individuals have the right to autonomy over their personal information and over how that information is used. Informed consent procedures give individuals the ability to make informed decisions about their personal information.
<p>Accessibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility means that services are planned, managed and delivered in a way that gives everyone the same opportunity to find and use services. • Accessibility is closely related to equity; both concepts are about fairness and both are related to the ethical concept of social justice. • Accessibility is also related to legal issues surrounding discrimination. For example, under the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> (Cth), Australian organisations providing web resources must ensure that information and services are provided in a non-discriminatory and accessible way.

Confidentiality
The principle of keeping personal information private, unless the person consents to sharing the information with other parties.

Informed consent
A person’s decision to agree to a healthcare treatment, having been informed about the intervention and any alternative options.

Accessibility
Ensuring that services are delivered in a way that gives everyone the same opportunity to use those services.

Social justice
The equal distribution of wealth, opportunity and privilege within a society, including equal access to community resources and opportunities.



Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity means that disadvantaged people and groups receive beneficial treatment so they can enjoy the same rights as others. • Equity is not the same as equality. Equality means everyone receives the same treatment. Equity means some people receive extra support.
Client rights and responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients have rights and responsibilities. In the healthcare sector, patients' rights are set out in the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights. • Some patient/client rights are enshrined in law, such as an adult's right to consent to or refuse medical treatment and these types of laws can lead to ethical dilemmas for service providers. For example, a client might refuse medical treatment based on a religious belief even when scientific evidence indicates that it could be lifesaving. • Some organisations set out the rights and responsibilities of clients within the organisation in a charter that it shares with clients upon commencement of services. • This is a rights-based approach, which situates the rights of service users at the centre of service provision, with a focus on accessibility, autonomy and equity. • Examples of client rights in a charter might include that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clients have the right to be treated with respect and courtesy - clients have the right to be part of decisions made about their care. • Examples of client responsibilities in a charter might include that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clients have a responsibility to treat staff, volunteers and other clients with respect - clients have a responsibility to observe safety procedures when attending the service.

Rights-based approach

Situates the rights of service users at the centre of service provision, with a focus on accessibility, autonomy and equity.

The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights is available at:

aspirelr.link/aus-charter-healthcare-rights

For more information about discrimination see: aspirelr.link/human-rights-discrimination

Video: Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights

This video describes the seven rights that comprise the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights: aspirelr.link/health-care-rights

Take note of all the rights clients have in relation to their healthcare.



Apply legal and ethical considerations

Legal and ethical considerations are applied through organisational policies, procedures and processes. The table below provides some examples. As these



examples demonstrate, a single organisational **policy**, **procedure** or process can address more than one law and/or ethical issue.

Examples of application of considerations	Legal and ethical considerations addressed in policy, procedure or process
An organisational policy outlines the supports available to clients with disabilities to ensure they can access services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination • Access • Equity
An organisational policy outlines how clients will be provided with information about their rights and responsibilities within a service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client rights and responsibilities
An organisational procedure explains how workers should store clients' personal information when provided in hard-copy format.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privacy • Confidentiality
An organisational process explains the steps workers need to follow to ensure clients can provide informed consent to sharing their personal information with another service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclosure

Policy
A course of action proposed by an organisation as a basis for making decisions.

Procedure
An established or official way of doing something.

Privacy
A fundamental human right designed to protect people from intrusion and to selectively express themselves.

Disclosure
The act of sharing or releasing private or personal information.

Example

Develop strategies to ensure the delivery of high-quality services

GoWell, a community-based mental health service that supports adults with mental illness and promotes mental health, provides a range of programs and services to adults with mental illness.

Issues such as discrimination and access are especially relevant to GoWell as the organisation has an extremely diverse client base, including clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, clients with disabilities and LGBTIQ+ clients.

GoWell has a range of policies and procedures that it relies on to ensure every adult in the communities where it works can access and participate meaningfully in the programs it provides.

Organisational vision and philosophical foundations

An **organisational vision** is the long-term change the organisation aspires to. Vision statements are succinct and designed to be motivational and aspirational.

Organisational vision
The long-term change the organisation aspires to.

An organisational philosophy provides a foundation for an organisation’s mission, goals and how it operates. An organisation’s philosophical statements outline foundational enduring principles and values, such as equity, fairness and social justice.

Develop strategies for high-quality services

Procedures need to support good practice standards and uphold the rights and interests of clients to ensure high-quality services.

Procedures are the steps or instructions that workers follow to undertake tasks and are typically outlined in a guideline or manual. When developing strategies for your organisation, it is important to consult with relevant stakeholders to ensure your strategies are feasible and appropriate.

The table below includes some examples of strategies that can be used to ensure procedures facilitate high-quality service delivery:

Review and, where required, amend/ update procedures, guidelines and manuals	Practice standards, legislation and community expectations change over time. Therefore, it is important for organisations to have a system in place to review organisational procedures to ensure they align with good practice standards and support the rights and interests of clients. Organisations also need effective methods for communicating amendments and updates to their workers.
Monitor practice to ensure procedures are being applied consistently and correctly by workers	Good procedures only lead to high-quality service delivery if they are implemented correctly and consistently; therefore, organisations need strategies to monitor practice.
Provide an infrastructure for learning for workers	Workers need to have the relevant skills and knowledge to implement procedures correctly and consistently. An infrastructure for learning will help workers develop necessary skills and knowledge, including adapting to amended and updated procedures.
Implement a system of continuous improvement	Systems of continuous improvement provide opportunities to identify and test-out incremental changes that lead to increased quality and efficiency.
Promote a workplace culture that supports good practice and clients’ rights and interests	Promoting workplace cultures that support good practice and clients’ rights and interests helps to motivate staff to follow procedures and maintain the skills and knowledge they need to apply procedures correctly and consistently.
Engage and empower clients and families	Clients and their families and carers have unique insights into whether services are supporting their rights and interests. By engaging and empowering clients and their families and carers, your organisation can adjust procedures to better meet clients’ needs. This might involve establishing a client reference group or strengthening client feedback processes.



Practice Task 2

Question 1

Briefly explain the difference between best practice and good practice.

Question 2

List at least three sources of good practice information that are relevant to the health and community services sectors.

Question 3

Identify two principles of holistic and person-centred practice.



Question 4

Match each term to its definition.

Discrimination	When everyone is treated fairly, according to their needs.
Accessibility	A fundamental human right designed to protect people from intrusion and to selectively express themselves.
Confidentiality	The act of sharing or releasing private or personal information.
Equity	Ensuring that services are delivered in a way that gives everyone the same opportunity to use those services.
Disclosure	The act of excluding or treating a person differently based solely on an attribute such as disability, age, gender, race or sexual orientation.
Privacy	The principle of keeping personal information private, unless the person consents to sharing the information with other parties.

Question 5

Legally and ethically, is it acceptable for a client to refuse medical treatment after having been given all relevant information by healthcare providers? Explain your response.



Question 6

Explain the difference between the vision statement and the philosophical statement of an organisation.

Question 7

List three strategies that can be used to ensure procedures deliver high-quality services that support good practice standards and the rights and interests of clients.

1C

Identify and address issues that impact on high-quality service delivery

A range of factors can create barriers to the delivery of high-quality services.

Barrier/s

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

Barriers to high-quality service delivery can occur at three levels of service provision:

- Structural/systemic level barriers relate to factors external to individual organisations and include issues such as lack of funding for a sector or problems with how a sector operates.
- Organisational level barriers relate to factors within an organisation and include issues such as workplace bullying or outdated procedures.
- Individual worker level barriers relate to factors that impact individual workers and include issues such as discriminatory attitudes or issues with professional/client boundaries.

Workers who hold leadership positions within an organisation can help identify and address organisational-level barriers and issues that impact the delivery of high-quality services.

Identify barriers

By identifying barriers to high-quality service delivery, you can help to ensure the needs of clients are met.

Organisational level barriers that impact the delivery of high-quality services:

- Poor leadership
- High staff workloads and staffing constraints
- Time pressures
- Lack of physical resources
- Workplace bullying
- Poor communication
- Problematic attitudes among workers



There are many ways of identifying these types of barriers within an organisation. Some methods are formal and involve systematic or routine procedures, such as analysing client feedback surveys. Other methods, such as conversations with colleagues, are more informal and can be used by individuals within an organisation during day-to-day operations.

Because barriers to high-quality service delivery can relate to sensitive and difficult situations, such as bullying or poor leadership, you need to make sure you approach this process sensitively and respectfully. Respecting colleagues' privacy and confidentiality is paramount.

The table below provides some examples of how workers in leadership and management positions can identify barriers:

<p>Talk to/consult workers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking to or consulting the workers who are implementing processes and procedures is a valuable way of learning more about barriers to high-quality service delivery. • This approach can be relatively informal, such as a quick conversation in the hallway, or more formal, such as a standard reporting process during a regular staff meeting. • The benefits of speaking directly with workers is that people in leadership and management positions may not always be aware of the day-to-day barriers that workers are facing when working with clients. • To encourage workers to share their concerns and frustrations, it is important to support and promote a culture of openness and honesty within your organisation.
<p>Talk to/consult leaders and managers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although not all leaders and managers will be aware of all the barriers workers are facing, they are likely to have some knowledge of workers' frustrations. Talking to leaders and managers about what they are being told about barriers can help you identify common issues. • Leaders and managers may also be aware of issues that workers are not as cognisant of, such as outdated policies and procedures, which pose a barrier to high-quality service delivery. • Again, your approach to this method could be informal or formal, depending on what is appropriate and feasible within your organisation.
<p>Online polls and surveys</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online polls and brief surveys for workers, team leaders and managers can be used to identify barriers and issues with service delivery. • Online polls and surveys are especially useful when an organisation has multiple sites and/or a large workforce. • Resources provided by websites such as Survey Monkey can be used to develop online polls and surveys.



Analyse internal data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most organisations collect some data relating to the quality of services they provide, such as from client feedback and incident reports. This data is used for reporting to funding bodies or describing organisational performance; for example, in an annual report, but it can also be a useful source of information for identifying barriers to high-quality service delivery.• There are two ways of analysing data: qualitative analysis and quantitative analysis. Quantitative analysis involves numbers and answers questions such as 'how many?' or 'how much?'. Qualitative analysis involves words and answers questions such as 'why is this happening?'
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Example

Identify and address issues that impact on high-quality service delivery

Jax is a team leader at GoWell, a community-based mental health service that supports adults with mental illness and promotes mental health.

Jax is working with colleagues to develop a quality framework for GoWell. As part of this process, Jax is identifying barriers and issues that are impacting the delivery of high-quality services at the organisation.

Jax begins by talking with her fellow team leaders and managers at GoWell. She sets up an online meeting to discuss perspectives on barriers and issues with four team leaders and managers from different sites across the country.

Based on the findings of this meeting, Jax designs a short online poll that she sends to 25 team leaders and managers to get their views on the barriers and issues identified in the online meeting and to identify any further barriers and issues.

Jax then sets up three focus groups with workers to discuss their views and perspectives on barriers and issues impacting the quality of service delivery at GoWell.

Address barriers

Barriers that relate to structural and systemic problems usually require a sector response. Certainly, you and your colleagues can contribute to efforts to address structural and systemic problems, but it is important to also be realistic about your ability to solve those problems alone.



At an organisational level, however, there are strategies you and your colleagues can use to address barriers and issues that are impacting high-quality service delivery. For example, cultural barriers are making it difficult for workers within your organisation to effectively communicate with clients from non-English speaking backgrounds. This barrier could be addressed by providing workers with information and training on techniques for communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds.

Here are some examples of other strategies that could be used to address organisational barriers to high-quality service delivery:

<p>Poor leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a training needs assessment for managers and leaders to identify skills gaps and provide training based on the findings of the analysis • Facilitate coaching and mentoring programs for managers and potential leaders • Create a culture of open, honest and constructive giving and receiving of feedback at all levels of the organisation; for example, worker to worker, worker to manager, manager to worker etc.
<p>High staff workloads and staffing constraints</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage a culture where managers demonstrate flexibility and listen to workers' suggestions of how to improve efficiency • Where feasible and appropriate, during periods where staff have high workloads, delegate tasks within a team or organisation • Hire temporary staff to undertake work that does not align with existing workers' skills and interests
<p>Time pressures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the efficiency of administrative processes, such as non-user-friendly online interfaces, so workers have more time to tend to other tasks • Support staff to trial small changes to improve efficiency and reduce time pressures as part of a continuous improvement cycle • Provide an Employee Assistance Program and encourage staff to use it to help them manage stress
<p>Lack of physical resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop partnerships with other organisations and share resources • Hire or lease equipment • Apply for funding from philanthropic organisations to purchase resources



Workplace bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a code of conduct for staff which clearly outlines behavioural expectations, including the unacceptability of bullying• Include information about bullying at induction so all staff understand what bullying is and what to do if they experience it• Promote and encourage a supportive culture in the workplace and discourage behaviours which lead to bullying, such as exclusion or gossiping
Poor communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement a quality induction process that helps new staff understand expectations regarding communication in the workplace• Encourage and promote an open-door policy so workers feel comfortable about approaching managers to discuss issues and problems• Provide opportunities for staff to create meaningful connections and effective professional relationships with each other
Problematic attitudes among workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage managers and leaders to set positive examples for workers, such as openness to different viewpoints and perspectives and demonstrating non-judgemental attitudes• Provide staff with opportunities to help them manage stress. Ongoing stress in the workplace can lead to a decline in morale and motivation

For more strategies to manage workplace bullying, visit: aspirelr.link/worksafe-preventing-bullying

Practice Task 3

Question 1

Which of the following are organisational barriers to high-quality service delivery? Select all that apply.

- Workplace bullying
- Workers' cultural backgrounds
- Lack of funding for a sector
- Outdated procedures
- Problems with how a sector operates



Question 2

Describe two strategies that can be used to address barriers relating to a lack of physical resources within an organisation.

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

1D

Identify opportunities for continuous improvement

Continuous improvement is the ongoing improvement of services or processes to enhance quality and efficiency.

Continuous improvement

An iterative process that involves an ongoing cycle of identification, planning, implementation and review.

According to the principles underpinning **continuous improvement**, significant organisational changes are often destabilising, therefore improvements come from small changes rather than major new ideas or inventions. However, the small and incremental changes that are at the heart of continuous quality improvement reduce the *fear factor*.

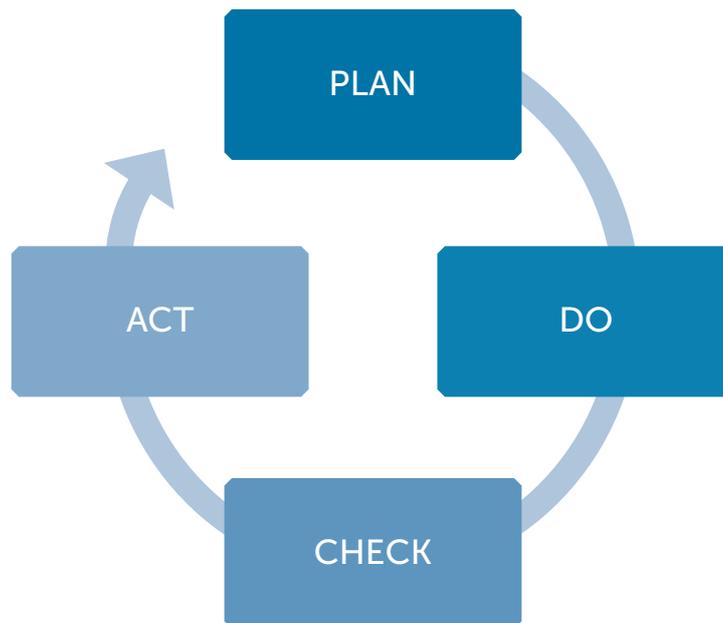
Continuous improvement is also founded on the concept that employees have unique and useful insights into organisational problems and issues. When employees are involved in generating ideas for improvement, they will have a greater investment in implementing changes.

Source: <https://blog.kainexus.com/continuous-improvement/6-principles-of-the-continuous-improvement-model>

Continuous improvement techniques

One common technique used to embed continuous improvement within an organisation is the Shewhart Cycle.

The Shewhart Cycle, also known as the plan-do-check-act (PDCA) cycle, involves four steps:





- Plan: Gather information about what is and is not working and develop a plan for improvement.
- Do: Test the potential improvement.
- Check: Evaluate the results of what you tried by measuring what has changed.
- Act: If what you tried was successful, inform others about the new approach. If what you tried was not successful, analyse what can be done differently next time and go through the cycle again.

In keeping with the model of continuous improvement, the PDCA cycle is continuous. It does not just happen at a certain time in the year or when a problem arises; it happens continuously, as part of everyday organisational operations.

Identify opportunities for continuous improvement

According to the model of continuous improvement, every worker in an organisation should identify opportunities for improvement, not just those in leadership or management roles. This is sometimes referred to as *bottom-up improvement*.

Bottom-up improvement makes sense because workers, from the nature of their role, have a better understanding of problems with service delivery and therefore are in a better position to try and find solutions.

Opportunities for continuous improvement can also be identified by clients, as well as by clients' family members and carers and volunteers. All these stakeholders have a unique insight into the quality of services provided and how they might be improved.

To encourage workers, clients and others to identify opportunities for continuous improvement, it is important to develop a workplace culture that encourages the identification and reporting of problems. Stakeholders who identify problems should be acknowledged, rather than shut down.

The key to continuous improvement is to then provide opportunities to trial solutions to these problems. For example, a worker who identifies a problem could use the PDCA cycle to trial a solution to a problem they are encountering. Changes that lead to improved quality or efficiency can then be rolled out to a whole team or the whole organisation.

Every single interaction, conversation or activity an employee has with others can be an opportunity for continuous improvement.



Example

Identify opportunities for continuous improvement

Jax and her colleagues at GoWell are working together to establish a workplace culture that encourages continuous improvement.

In the past, workers who identified problems with service delivery at GoWell were often viewed as complainers or troublemakers. However, Jax and her colleagues understand that when workers highlight problems it provides opportunities for continuous improvement. Rather than being shut down, a worker who identifies a problem can be invited to come up with and trial solutions to the problem as part of the continuous improvement process.

Jax and her colleagues have noticed some changes at their sites resulting from this deliberate push to change workplace culture. Workers are more willing to share their views and opinions about problems with service delivery, and are engaging in the process of trialling solutions.

Operational plans

Operational plan

A detailed description of the key activities and goals an organisation will be undertaking during a specific period, including who does what and when and how they do it.

An **operational plan** is a detailed description of the key activities and goals an organisation will be undertaking during a specific period, such as the financial year, including who does what and when and how they do it.

Incorporating opportunities for continuous improvement into an organisation's operational plan helps embed continuous improvement into an organisation's operations and ensures accountability for continuous improvement goals.

Continuous improvement plans

A **continuous improvement** plan outlines the range of activities that are intended to lead to gradual, ongoing improvements to services, processes and programs through continued review, measurement and action.

The plan outlines your organisation's approach to continuous improvement and defines the relevant processes, such as who can identify opportunities for improvement, how they can put forward ideas for improvement and how ideas will be documented. In this way, continuous improvement plans help with implementing continuous improvement processes.

An organisation's continuous improvement plan should align with the organisation's vision and philosophy.

A continuous improvement plan should include the following information:



Information to include	Description of information	Examples of content*
Purpose of the plan	Outlines the reasons why the organisation has a continuous improvement plan	This continuous improvement plan encourages communication, questioning and analysis of new and existing activities and outlines what our organisation will do to meet the highest standard of service and apply best practice.
Identifying opportunities	Outlines how opportunities for improvement will be identified in the organisation	Continuous improvement opportunities may be identified in everyday work and life. They may be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raised in conversations • reported in quality evaluations • identified through complaints. Ideas to improve services can come from anyone including people with disability, family, carers, staff and volunteers.
Exploring ideas	Outlines the factors that will be considered when exploring ideas for improvement	A continuous improvement panel provides advice to the organisation about ideas raised through formal and informal channels and determines their priority. The CEO is responsible for operational decisions including the allocation of resources.
Monitoring progress	Outlines how the ideas that are implemented will be monitored, such as in a continuous improvement register	The continuous improvement register is used to identify continuous improvement activities and their outcomes.
Definitions	Definitions of key terms included in the plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliverable: Something that must be provided. Often refers to reports or hard copy documents but can also refer to an activity such as a workshop. • Outcomes: The results of an activity linked to an agreed objective.

Continuous improvement register
A tool used to document continuous improvement activities and their outcomes in a central location.

* Examples sourced from template provided by National Disability Services (NDS) at: <https://www.nds.org.au/images/resources/national-standards-toolkit/Continuous-improvement-plan.docx>

Examples of continuous improvement plan templates are available at:
aspirelr.link/nds-improvement-plan
aspirelr.link/hpw-improvement-plan



Continuous improvement and sustainability

Organisations can reduce costs, minimise waste and increase efficiency through continuous improvement. Here are some examples of how it can enhance various forms of sustainability in the workplace:

Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By enhancing efficiency, continuous improvement processes can reduce waste and thereby have environmental benefits for the community.• For example, collecting data from clients via tablet rather than hard-copy form could lead to a reduction in energy usage due to reduced need for storage.
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuous improvement processes can lead to cost savings for organisations, thereby contributing to their economic sustainability.• For example, using a hot-desk system in an office with many casual and part-time staff could lead to greater shared use of resources, such as desktop monitors, creating cost-savings.
Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuous improvement processes can help to improve employee satisfaction, thereby leading to workforce sustainability.• When employees feel that their ideas are valued and they have input into what they do and how they do it, it can make them more motivated and engaged in their work.
Social sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social sustainability is about the people who are impacted by an organisation, including workers, managers, clients, families and community members.• A workplace that is socially sustainable:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- is safe- treats employees fairly- listens to the local community- considers its broader impact on society; for example, how and where materials are sourced.• Through continuous improvement, organisations can find efficiencies that benefit the workforce, community and broader society.

Sources: www.viima.com/blog/develop-continuous-improvement-plan; www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8T7iwIVulk

A commitment to environmental, economic, workforce and social sustainability can be embedded in other principles and practices of an organisation including its:

- **vision and mission.** The principles outlined in an organisation's vision and mission could reinforce its commitment to fairness and equity
- **hiring policies.** An organisation might require all staff involved in decision-making regarding hiring new workers to undergo training to ensure hiring processes are fair and non-discriminatory



- procurement guidelines. The process for procuring resources could prioritise purchases from Indigenous-led organisations as a means of empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- leave policies. Leave policies could incorporate opportunities for staff to take unpaid leave to do volunteer work that benefits the local community.

Video: Social sustainability

This video explains the meaning of social sustainability:

aspirelr.link/yt-social-sustainability-meaning

List the various ways an organisation can support social sustainability.



Work health and safety

Work health and safety is relevant to continuous improvement and to workplace sustainability. Safety is a key element of a socially sustainable workplace and continuous improvement activities can improve health and safety for workers.

Work health and safety (WHS) involves the management of risks to the health and safety of people in the workplace. Each state and territory in Australia has its own body for regulating and enforcing work health and safety (WHS) laws, such as SafeWork NSW and WorkSafe ACT.

Organisations apply the various laws and ethical considerations relating to workplace health and safety through their policies, procedures and guidelines, such as policies regarding workers' health and safety responsibilities and procedures setting out how workers report incidents and accidents.

For more information about WHS laws in your state or territory see:

aspirelr.link/law-and-regulation-legislation

Practice Task 4

Question 1

Provide a brief example of how continuous improvement processes can benefit the environmental and economic sustainability of an organisation.



Question 2

Describe how continuous improvement processes can lead to workforce sustainability.

Question 3

Which of the following statements accurately describes the principles and practices that enhance social sustainability? Tick all that apply.

- The practices and principles ensure that employees are treated fairly.
- The practices and principles benefit members of the local community.
- The practices and principles benefit profit-making companies.
- The practices and principles are designed to ensure materials are purchased from ethical sources.
- The practices and principles lead the organisation to listen to members of the local community.

Question 4

Provide two examples of how organisations can meet their legal and ethical requirements relating to work health and safety.

**Question 5**

Briefly explain what is meant by bottom-up improvement when identifying opportunities for continuous improvement within an organisation.

Question 6

Explain why operational plans are relevant to continuous improvement.

Question 7

Which of the following pieces of information should be included in a continuous improvement plan? Tick all that apply.

- Exploring ideas for improvement
- Identifying opportunities for improvement
- Purpose of the plan
- History of the plan
- Monitoring progress of plan

1E

Plan and ensure the involvement of all parties in quality improvement processes

Organisations that do continuous improvement well, embed it in their values.

An organisation that is good at continuous improvement demonstrates signs of ongoing improvement in all areas, including:

- frontline service delivery
- administration
- professional development and training
- hiring and induction processes and procedures
- policy development.

To become this type of organisation requires planning, along with practical steps and cultural change.

Involve the workforce in quality improvement

Everyone in the workforce, including managers, team leaders, frontline workers and volunteers, should understand their role in quality improvement processes within the organisation.

Here are some important factors to consider when planning for the involvement of the workforce in quality improvement processes:

Alignment with vision and objectives	A strong alignment between an organisation's vision and objectives and the continuous improvement plan will help everyone understand the purpose and benefits of their involvement in quality improvement processes.
Supportive leadership	Leaders and managers need to clearly demonstrate their support for quality improvement. Leaders and managers also need supporting to develop their own skills to sustain continuous improvement and motivate their teams.
A culture of continuous improvement	A culture of continuous improvement is a system of shared values within an organisation that encourages the workforce to contribute to improvement through incremental change. Rather than enforcing changes to ensure continuous improvement, a culture of continuous improvement inspires workers to strive for high-quality service provision.



Effective communication

Organisation-wide support for quality improvement relies upon effective ongoing communication. Communicating and celebrating small wins relating to quality improvement will help to engage and motivate the workforce.

Source: www.viima.com/blog/develop-continuous-improvement-plan

Here are some tips for helping to ensure workers and managers are involved in quality improvement processes:

- Support and promote a culture of openness and honesty so workers are willing to talk about their frustrations and concerns without fear of reprisal or judgement.
- Support and promote a culture of respect so workers and volunteers feel that their frustrations and concerns are acknowledged and heard by decision-makers within the organisation.
- Establish and build relationships of partnership and trust among staff, volunteers and managers so everyone feels comfortable about identifying and tackling problems together.
- Encourage a culture of constructive giving and receiving of feedback so workers and managers become accustomed to a culture of ongoing improvement.
- Provide workers with training and professional development opportunities that help them learn how to encourage and respond positively and effectively to client feedback.
- Promote a culture of innovative and critical thinking by encouraging employees to ask questions and think outside the box.
- Make a standing item on meeting agendas for identifying opportunities for improvement and exploring ideas.
- Create forums, spaces and opportunities for workers to reflect on and share ideas for improvement with each other, such as brainstorming sessions and communities of practice.
- Include discussions about continuous improvement in performance review processes. Managers could give employees feedback on the impact of their ideas for improvement.

Involve clients and other stakeholders in quality improvement

Clients have first-hand insight into the quality of service your organisation provides. Through feedback, clients help organisations learn about what and how they can improve.

Clients' families and carers can also provide important insights into service quality as they will have insight into the impact of services on clients and what could be improved.

Other stakeholders, including partner organisations and key experts in the field, will be able to provide ideas for improvement as part of the continuous improvement process.

You can help plan the involvement of stakeholders in quality improvement processes by outlining their role in the continuous improvement plan. For example, consider:

- how clients, families and carers will be involved in identifying opportunities for improvement. What supports do they need to do so?
- how partner organisations and key experts in the field might be involved in exploring ideas for improvement. What would make it possible for them to participate?

Tips for ensuring stakeholder involvement in quality improvement processes:

- Support and promote relationships of partnership and trust between workers and clients and, where appropriate, between workers and clients' families and carers so these parties feel comfortable about raising problems.
- Provide clients with information about how they can provide feedback or make complaints to the organisation about service quality.
- Ensure that clients have multiple methods of providing feedback or making complaints about service quality; such as suggestion boxes, online forms, hard-copy feedback forms and dedicated email addresses.
- Develop and monitor client feedback processes to ensure clients feel safe making complaints about service delivery without fear of reprisal or judgement.
- Include partner organisations, key experts and/or client representatives, and/or clients' families and carers where appropriate, in panels and reference groups that are responsible for identifying opportunities and exploring ideas for improvement.

Example

Plan and ensure the involvement of all parties

As well as encouraging workers at GoWell to identify opportunities for continuous improvement, Jax and her colleagues are also working on ways to ensure the involvement of clients in the quality improvement process.

They update the organisation's website to make it clearer to clients how they can provide feedback or make complaints about GoWell's services. They develop an information sheet for workers to tell them how to share information with clients about providing feedback and making complaints. They also explore the possibility of inviting clients to participate in a continuous improvement panel.



Practice Task 5

Question 1

Identify two factors that are important to consider when planning for the involvement of the workforce in quality improvement processes.

Question 2

List two ways of ensuring the involvement of clients in quality improvement processes.



Summary

- A framework for quality service delivery is an overview of an organisation's approach to delivering quality services.
- Standards provide workers with an indication of what is required, and guidelines provide directions for actions or behaviour.
- In health and community services settings, quality service standards are used to inform clients about the level of service they should expect.
- Benchmarking is a process that involves comparing the methods, procedures and/or performance of an organisation with an appropriate comparison.
- Best practice is the most effective practice, good practice is positive or desirable.
- Holistic and person-centred support places the client at the centre of service delivery and involves a consideration of the whole person.
- Continuous improvement is the ongoing improvement of services or processes to enhance quality and efficiency.
- According to the model of continuous improvement, every worker within an organisation identifies opportunities for improvement, not just those in leadership roles.
- A continuous improvement plan incorporates the range of activities that are intended to lead to gradual, continuing improvements to services.
- Everyone in an organisation's workforce should understand their role in quality improvement processes.



Learning Checkpoint 1

Develop a framework for quality service delivery

Part A

1. List two person-centred support strategies that can be used during consultation to encourage participation.

2. Number each step from 1 to 5 in the order you would follow when benchmarking.

	Implementation
	Evaluation
	Comparison
	Investigation
	Preparation



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

a. South Australia has a quality framework for services that deliver Alcohol and Other Drugs treatment services.	Yes / No
b. The Human Services Quality Framework is applicable to human services in Victoria.	Yes / No
c. In Australia, it is unlawful to discriminate against someone based on their sexual orientation.	Yes / No
d. The Privacy Act 1988 is a state-based law.	Yes / No
e. Confidentiality is both a legal and an ethical consideration for organisations.	Yes / No
f. Organisations within the community services sector are legally required to provide clients with a charter of their rights and responsibilities.	Yes / No
g. Australia has one national body that is responsible for regulating and enforcing work health and safety (WHS) laws.	Yes / No

4. List three examples of national quality standards for the community services sector in Australia.



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

a. The concept of disclosure requires workers to disclose all information relating to a person's mental health.	Yes / No
b. If a specific group of people within a community have difficulties getting information about a service, the service could be considered inaccessible.	Yes / No
c. Essentially, equality and equity mean the same thing.	Yes / No
d. An organisation's philosophical statement outlines foundational enduring principles and values.	Yes / No
e. Clients have the legal right to attend a service that abides by Australian work health and safety laws but they do not have the responsibility to contribute to maintaining the workplace's health and safety.	Yes / No

6. List two examples of national quality standards or guidelines for the mental health sector in Australia.

7. Which of the following statements accurately describe best practice? Tick all that apply.

- Best practice is the most effective practice for delivering a particular outcome.
- Best practice produces superior results.
- Best practices are typically new or innovative.
- Best practice is equivalent to good practice.
- Best practice is typically recognised as best practice in the public domain.



8. Explain why reviewing and updating organisational procedures helps to ensure organisations are providing high-quality services that support good practice standards and the rights and interests of clients.

9. Which of the following descriptions accurately describe an organisation’s vision statements? Tick all that apply.

- Vision statements are succinct.
- Vision statements are aspirational.
- Vision statements are conversational.
- Vision statements are comprehensive.
- Vision statements are motivational.

10. Identify two strategies that could be used to address barriers to the delivery of high-quality service caused by workplace bullying and harassment.



- 11.** Briefly outline why principles and practices to enhance sustainability in the workplace are important for employees, the local community and the broader community.

- 12.** List two stakeholder groups who could be involved in identifying opportunities for continuous improvement within an organisation.

Part B

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

Case study

Anique is a Team Leader at Strong Steps, an early childhood intervention service. The service provides supports to young children (aged 0-5 years) with disabilities and their families.

Anique is working with her colleagues to develop a quality framework for Strong Steps which includes identifying barriers and issues that are impacting on the delivery of high-quality service, developing a continuous improvement plan and making sure all relevant parties are involved in the continuous improvement process.



- 1.** Describe two methods that Anique could use to identify barriers or issues that impact on the delivery of high-quality service.

- 2.** Anique is completing the section in the continuous improvement plan about identifying opportunities. Describe what Anique needs to explain in this section of the plan.

- 3.** Explain why it is important for Anique and her colleagues to include opportunities for continuous improvement in Strong Step's operational plans.

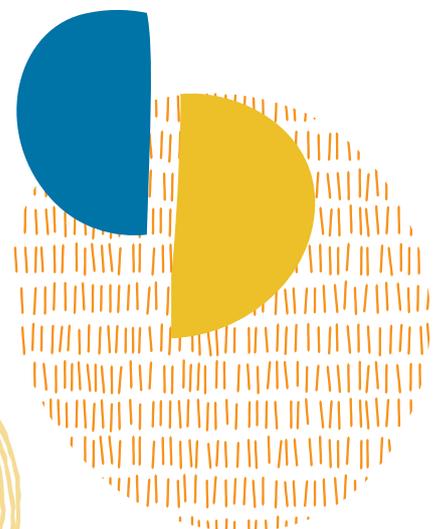


4. List four ways Anique and her colleagues can ensure the involvement of workers in the quality improvement process.



Topic 2: Monitor and review service delivery against quality framework

- 2A Monitor and review service delivery and strategies for addressing barriers
- 2B Update procedures to reflect good practice
- 2C Use feedback mechanisms to involve service users in the review process
- 2D Investigate and document the effects of services on clients
- 2E Provide clients and stakeholders with results of service reviews



2A

Monitor and review service delivery and strategies for addressing barriers

To ensure the quality of service delivery, organisations need to collect, analyse and review data and information.

Monitoring

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

Monitoring is an ongoing process of collecting and analysing relevant information. Reviewing involves examining the results and determining what needs to change.

In this case, you are monitoring and reviewing:

- service delivery against a quality framework
- strategies for addressing identified barriers and issues that relate to quality.

Establish indicators of change

Indicator

(sometimes referred to as 'indicators of change' or 'indicators of practice') Something that indicates the state or level of something; a gauge or measure.

Some industries and sectors have established **indicators** that services can use to monitor and review service quality. For example, the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care has a set of indicators for hospitals that can be used to identify areas where they are doing well and areas where they can improve.

For more information about hospital indicators from the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, visit: aspirelr.link/acsq-health-care-indicators

Some quality frameworks also have indicators that services can use to monitor and review service quality. For example, the National Standards for Disability Services has a list of indicators of practice that are linked to six standards.

The National Standards for Disability Services, which includes indicators of practice, is available at: aspirelr.link/nsds-indicators-of-practice

Collect information

In addition to workers, clients and their families and carers can also provide valuable information about service delivery.

Here are some methods that could be used to collect information about service delivery and some strategies for addressing barriers to service quality:



<p>Staff and client feedback mechanisms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client feedback mechanisms such as client feedback forms and complaint registers can provide useful information about service delivery and its alignment with a quality framework. • Staff feedback mechanisms include staff satisfaction surveys and exit interviews. • Where workplace culture has been identified as a barrier to service quality, staff satisfaction surveys can provide valuable information about the effectiveness of strategies to address such issues as low morale or high levels of workplace stress.
<p>Client, family/ carer and staff surveys</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client surveys can be tailored to collect information about service delivery, such as the frequency of experiences of holistic and person-centred care. • Staff surveys can be used to better understand the effectiveness of strategies designed to address barriers to service quality, such as poor internal communication. • Surveys are a useful way of gathering information from a large group of people, however respondents are required to have a reasonable level of literacy.
<p>Interviews with clients, families/ carers and staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews are a useful way of gathering in-depth and detailed information from a small group of people. • The way interviews are conducted can differ substantially. Highly structured interviews might comprise a specific number of questions to be asked in a particular order. Unstructured interviews might have questions that change depending on how the conversation unfolds. • Whereas surveys provide information about how much and how many; for example, frequency of events, interviews can provide information about thoughts and feelings, such as how clients feel when they interact with workers. • Interviews can be used to better understand the effectiveness of strategies designed to address barriers to service quality, such as workplace bullying. • Interviews are a useful way of monitoring sensitive issues such as workplace bullying because it is easier to maintain confidentiality during a one-on-one interview when compared to other methods, such as focus groups.
<p>Self-assessment tools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some quality frameworks provide tools for organisations to self-assess service quality. • For example, the Human Services Quality Framework (Queensland) has a guide for self-assessment that outlines organisational requirements for demonstrating quality according to the relevant standards as well as providing indicators of quality.

For more information about self-assessment as part of the Human Services Quality Framework, visit: aspirelr.link/hsqf-self-assessment



Analyse information

Analysis is part of the process of reviewing information. The information collected will either be quantitative or qualitative:

Quantitative data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Numerical data or data that can easily be converted into numbers• Tells us how much, how many and how often• Typically collected via surveys
Qualitative data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data expressed in words• Tells us about attitudes, perceptions, experiences and behaviours• Typically collected via focus groups and interviews

Quantitative data is analysed via techniques, such as a calculation of:

- frequency, indicating how often something has occurred
- percentages, indicating the amount, number, or rate of something in relation to the whole
- the mean, which is the average score.

Qualitative data is analysed by identifying patterns and meanings. The most common method used for analysing qualitative data is a thematic analysis, which involves the identification of common issues, ideas, and opinions.

Video: Qualitative and quantitative data

This video explains the different between qualitative and quantitative data:
aspirelr.link/yt-quali-quant



Make recommendations

If you have identified that your organisation is not meeting the standards outlined in the relevant quality framework, or if the strategies to address barriers to quality are not leading to the desired outcomes, you will need to make recommendations for improvement.

Recommendations should be informed by evidence as they are designed to be persuasive. In this case, the evidence informing your recommendations will be the information you have collected about service delivery and barriers to quality.

The amount of information you provide in your recommendations will depend on your organisational requirements. Some organisations will have a template that you can use to write your recommendations.



When providing written recommendations, information to support the recommendation is typically provided first. The recommendations themselves should be:

- one sentence only
- succinct and clear
- begin with an action verb, such as, create, establish, coordinate.

If there is more than one recommendation, number each one.

Example

Monitor and review service delivery and strategies for addressing barriers

Pixie-Anne is a manager at Helping Hand, a not-for-profit organisation that provides services and supports to individuals and families living in a disadvantaged community on the outskirts of a capital city.

Pixie-Anne is involved in the process of regularly reviewing service delivery at Helping Hand, based on the quality framework and using data collected from multiple sources. Pixie-Anne often helps to develop recommendations for improving service delivery at Helping Hand based upon the review process. The recommendations are listed in a standard template and presented to the directors, CEO and board every three months.

Practice Task 6

Question 1

List two methods that can be used to monitor service delivery and barriers relating to quality.



Question 2

Why is it important to use two types of data when reviewing information about service delivery and barriers relating to quality?

Question 3

Briefly outline the relevance of indicators when using a quality framework to monitor service delivery.

Question 4

Which of the following are requirements when providing written recommendations for service improvement? Select all that apply.

- The recommendation should be presented in a standard template.
- The recommendation should be one sentence only.
- The recommendation should be one paragraph only.
- The recommendation should be succinct and clear.
- The recommendation should begin with an action verb.

2B

Update procedures to reflect good practice

Best practice service management standards require organisations to regularly review their procedures.

Health and community services operate in **dynamic social environments**. People's expectations and communities' requirements change over time. Researchers discover new and more effective ways of providing services and meeting clients' needs. Old laws are scrapped or amended and new legislation relevant to the delivery of services is introduced.

Dynamic social environment
Characterised by constant activity, change or progress.

For these reasons, it is necessary for services to regularly update service delivery procedures to reflect good practice and respond to changing legislative requirements and client needs.

There is no standard timeline for updating procedures; however, at a minimum procedures should be reviewed annually. Beyond the standard annual review, the regularity of updates will depend on factors such as organisational expectations and requirements, the nature of the services provided, and legislative and funding requirements.

In addition to clarifying how frequently procedures need to be updated, other issues to consider when updating procedures include the following:

- Who is responsible for reviewing procedures? The review of workplace procedures is typically undertaken by specific staff or groups of staff who are responsible for that task.
- Who is responsible for drafting new procedures?
- Who will be involved in providing feedback on draft procedures and what is the process for involving them?
- Who is responsible for authorising new procedures?
- Who is responsible for revising guidelines and manuals in accordance with new procedures, including online guidelines and manuals?

Update procedures to reflect good practice

Everyone within an organisation has a responsibility to keep up to date with new developments relating to practice, including ideas around good practice.

Some of the ways they can do this include:

- regularly checking authoritative sources regarding good and best practice
- following thought leaders on social media and through newsletters, bulletins and other forms of communication



- developing professional networks within and outside the organisation to stay in touch with changes and developments
- attending professional workshops, seminars and conferences relating to practice.

Update procedures to respond to changing legislative requirements

Changes to legislation can relate to a range of different aspects of service delivery including how organisations:

- record, share and store client information
- manage client safety
- work with specific groups of clients; for example, with children.

If there is a legislative change, employees at all levels of an organisation will have specific responsibilities to ensure procedures are updated and implemented.

 Senior staff	Senior staff are typically responsible for developing new procedures to ensure legislative changes are implemented.
 Managers	Managers are typically responsible for ensuring procedures relating to the legislative changes are implemented.
 Workers	Workers are responsible for implementing procedures through the day-to-day delivery of services and are accountable to their managers through performance management systems, codes of conduct and other mechanisms.

Update procedures to respond to changing client needs

Clients may present with a range of needs, many of which are constant. However, these needs may vary as circumstances in the client's life or their health outcomes change.

Client needs include:

- physical needs, such as food and sleep
- emotional and social needs, such as the need for acceptance, belonging and validation



- environmental needs, such as the need for adequate and safe housing
- medical needs, such as the need for medical treatment or medication.

In some cases, one service will be able to meet a range of clients' needs. A supported accommodation service for people with disabilities, for example, might meet clients' physical needs for food, their environmental needs for adequate housing and their emotional and social needs for acceptance and belonging.

In other cases, multiple services will be required to meet the multiple needs of clients. For example, a home delivered meal service will meet a client's physical need for food, a community-based housing service will meet their need for adequate housing and a day program will meet their need for acceptance and belonging.

Some client needs will remain constant, and others will vary over time. For example, if a new treatment for a common medical condition is found, the medical needs of many clients using a service may change.

Client needs can also change as community expectations evolve. For example, patients once expected doctors to provide specific treatments based on their own clinical expertise. Patients' own views and perspectives were typically of secondary importance. The doctor was the expert and the patient was expected to follow their instructions.

Our expectations and requirements of healthcare have changed over time and most doctors now apply a more collaborative approach. Patients' views and perspectives have a critical role in decisions about treatment, and many patients and doctors would view this role as essential if treatment is to be effective.

Organisations have their own processes for monitoring and responding to the changing needs and preferences of clients. Here are some examples of these processes:

- Family members request reviews of clients' needs.
- Changing client needs are identified through formal review processes.
- Workers respond to the changing needs of individual clients as and when they occur.
- Workers report on common changes in clients' needs.
- Staff maintain awareness of and stay updated about changes in the broader community which indicate potential changing needs of clients; for example, the proportion of clients with multiple and complex needs has increased.

Routinely collecting and analysing data regarding client needs is essential for the process of updating procedures. It enables organisations to identify common changes in the needs of their client base and then make decisions about whether and how procedures need to be updated.



Support staff to develop competencies

Because service delivery requirements change over time, it is important to ensure that staff who are delivering services have the skills and knowledge they need to meet these new requirements.

Indications staff may need to develop additional competencies:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers are indicating to line managers that they are not feeling confident and/or are struggling to implement the new service delivery requirements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers are reporting that they are confused and/or frustrated by the changing service delivery requirements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers are implementing the requirements incorrectly or inconsistently.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client feedback indicates that staff are not meeting new service requirements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government agencies and/or peak bodies that are driving the changes notify services that staff will need specific competencies to meet the changing service requirements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal sources of information about staff members' current skills and knowledge; for example, inventory of skills or results of a Training Needs Analysis, indicate gaps in necessary competencies.

Identify opportunities for staff to develop competencies

Opportunities for staff to develop competencies relating to changing service delivery requirements can take many forms. Here are some examples and how to identify them:

Opportunities	Description
<p>Training and professional development opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When major legislative changes are introduced, government and/or other agencies, such as peak bodies, often provide training to workers so they can develop the competencies they need to understand and implement those legislative changes. To identify these opportunities, subscribe to newsletters and bulletins provided by peak bodies and relevant government agencies and follow them on social media for news and updates. You could also draw upon your professional networks to find out about any useful training and professional development opportunities available.



Opportunities	Description
Resources and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some peak bodies and government agencies provide resources and tools for workers and organisations to help them understand how to develop competencies in response to legislative changes, changing community expectations and developments in practice. • Resources and tools might include information sheets, templates, glossaries, videos, podcasts and online courses. • To identify these opportunities, check the relevant pages of peak body and government agency websites and follow them on social media. • You could also contact peak bodies and government agencies directly and ask them whether resources and tools are available.
Coaching and mentoring opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify staff who are highly competent in a specific area and are interested in coaching and mentoring other staff. • Coaching and mentoring are a beneficial way of providing staff with hands on practical support to develop new skills. • Through coaching and mentoring, coaches and mentors can build on their leadership skills. • To identify these opportunities, speak with staff and managers to find suitable and willing coaches and mentors.

When it comes to major legislative or practice changes, workers might also benefit from in-house training (from within your organisation) which includes information about:

- why the changes have been introduced
- how the changes relate to their role
- their responsibilities
- any new tools they need to use, such as checklists or plans.

It is important that managers are available to answer any questions workers may have about the changes or any associated procedures.

Example

Update procedures to reflect good practice and support staff to respond to changing requirements and needs

The government in the state where Helping Hand is based is introducing significant new legislation which will impact how the organisation delivers services to their clients.



Managers and team leaders at Helping Hand have been asked to work together to identify the new competencies their staff will need to develop as a result of the introduction of the new legislation.

Pixie-Anne and her colleagues begin by attending an information session about the new legislation run by the relevant government department.

This alerts them to the new competencies that staff may need to develop.

They then work with Helping Hand’s human resources team, conducting a Training Needs Analysis to identify gaps in their workers’ current competencies.

Once Pixie-Anne and her colleagues have identified which competencies their workers need to develop, they start to identify opportunities for staff to develop those competencies. They begin this process by contacting the relevant government department and a community service peak body to discuss resources and tools that are available now, or are scheduled for the future.

Practice Task 7

Question 1

Explain how frequently organisations should update service delivery procedures relating to good practice.



Question 2

List two processes organisations use to monitor and respond to the changing needs and preferences of clients.

Question 3

Identify three indications that staff may need to develop competencies to meet changing service requirements.

Question 4

Briefly outline the practical steps organisations can take to identify training and professional development opportunities for staff to meet changing service delivery requirements.

2C

Use feedback mechanisms to involve service users in the review process

A feedback mechanism is a tool used to seek out and respond to opinions, concerns, ideas and suggestions of service users and other relevant parties.

Feedback mechanisms provide organisations with information about the quality and effectiveness of their services which they can then use to make improvements.

When reviewing service delivery, all users of the service should have the opportunity to provide feedback, as well as any other relevant parties involved in the review process.

Feedback mechanisms

A range of relevant parties could be involved in the feedback process to review service quality, including:

- clients
- clients' family members
- clients' carers
- clients who used the service in the past but are no longer using the service, and their family members and carers
- workers
- managers
- other service providers and professionals who work with the organisation.

Examples of feedback mechanisms include the following:

Online feedback forms	Many organisations and businesses have online feedback forms that clients and other parties can use to provide feedback.
Surveys	Surveys can be completed by respondents online, in desktop or mobile format, or in a hard-copy format that is either sent to the client in the mail or provided to them by a staff member.
Interviews	Interviews can be used to collect feedback from clients either face-to-face or over the phone.



<p>Focus groups</p>	<p>Focus groups typically involve eight to ten people in addition to a facilitator who asks questions and a notetaker who records the feedback provided.</p> <p>Focus groups are a good way of delving into clients' feelings and beliefs about services and of exploring complex issues. However, it can be difficult for clients to maintain anonymity and some clients may find it difficult to share sensitive information in a group setting.</p>
<p>Suggestion boxes</p>	<p>Suggestion boxes are an old-fashioned way of collecting feedback but, when used in combination with other more contemporary options, they can still help a service learn about what they are doing well and what could be improved.</p> <p>Suggestion boxes are useful because, if placed in a discrete location, they allow clients to provide feedback anonymously. They do, however, require a reasonable level of literacy and are not feasible for services that provide home-based services.</p>

Because of the diverse range of parties that may be involved in providing feedback, it is a good idea to use more than one **feedback mechanism**, such as an online feedback form for younger clients and a hard-copy feedback form for older clients.

Feedback mechanism
A tool used to seek out and respond to the opinions, concerns, ideas and suggestions of service users and other relevant parties.

Video: Devising survey questions

This video explains how to develop good survey questions:
aspirelr.link/yt-devising-survey-questions

Take note of all seven tips.



Example

Use feedback mechanisms to involve service users and relevant others in the review process

Helping Hand, an organisation that provides supports to individuals and families within a disadvantaged community, wants to ensure that everyone who uses their services can provide feedback.

Helping Hand has a diverse cohort of clients including parents with young children, teenagers, young adults, retired and elderly people. To ensure all their clients can provide them with feedback, Helping Hand has established multiple feedback mechanisms including an online feedback form, a hard-copy feedback form and a suggestion box in a discrete location beside the reception area.



Feedback versus complaints

Complaint

Communicating something you believe is wrong and asking for it to be fixed.

Feedback

Information on a person's performance or task, that can form the basis for improvement.

A **complaint** is a specific grievance from someone who has been negatively affected by something an organisation has or has not done. **Feedback** is the opinions, concerns, ideas and suggestions provided by a service user or other relevant party that organisations might adopt, challenge or disagree with.

Organisations have an ethical responsibility to provide service users with a response and a remedy, such as an apology or a refund, when they make a complaint. This is not necessarily the case with feedback. For example, a client might be providing positive feedback on the service they provided and this does not necessarily require a response.

Set up and use feedback mechanisms

Here are some key factors to consider when setting up and using feedback mechanisms:

Setting up mechanisms	Communication channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every person who uses the service should be able to provide feedback during the review process, so it is important to use feedback methods that are available to and preferred by them. • For example, some clients may not be able to provide feedback online. Therefore other opportunities for providing feedback, such as hard-copy questionnaires, will need to be available. • It is a good idea to use multiple feedback mechanisms where possible. The more feedback mechanisms you use, the higher the likelihood that respondents will engage in the feedback process.
	Privacy, confidentiality and other sensitivities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that service users and other relevant parties can provide feedback in a safe and confidential way. • Explain what steps are being taken to ensure privacy and confidentiality to the relevant parties. For example, perhaps your organisation will anonymise data before it is analysed.



<p>Setting up mechanisms (cont.)</p>	<p>Testing and refinement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a good idea to test mechanisms before you make them available to users. • For example, if you have developed a questionnaire ask a few people to fill it out to make sure the questions make sense and are in a logical order. • Test online feedback forms, email addresses and online links to ensure they are working properly.
<p>Using mechanisms</p>	<p>Reiterate confidentiality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reiterate the confidentiality of any shared information. • For example, when a focus group is being undertaken to gather feedback, remind participants that the information they share will be confidential.
	<p>Monitor mechanism use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with service users to ask them how the feedback mechanisms are, or are not, working. • You may need to add additional mechanisms if some clients are not using the existing mechanisms.
	<p>Demonstrate that you have listened</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisations can demonstrate that they have listened to feedback by <i>closing the loop</i> in the feedback cycle. • Closing the loop in the feedback cycle typically involves communicating with the people who provided feedback about the results of the review. This should include what feedback was provided and how it will be used, such as to develop new policies, improve processes etc.

Based upon guidelines produced by the UNHCR at: www.unhcr.org/innovation/10-steps-to-setting-up-an-effective-feedback-mechanism/



Practice Task 8

Question 1

Explain the ethical responsibilities of organisations when it comes to service users' complaints.

Question 2

List two factors that need to be considered when setting up feedback mechanisms as part of a quality review process.

Question 3

Which of the following statements describe what is typically involved in closing the loop on feedback mechanisms? Tick all that apply.

- Communicating to respondents about what feedback was provided
- Communicating to respondents about the qualifications of workers who analysed the data
- Communicating to respondents about the results of the review
- Communicating to respondents about how the feedback will be used
- Communicating to respondents about the organisation's vision and mission

2D

Investigate and document the effects of services on clients

An essential aspect of monitoring and reviewing the quality of service delivery is to investigate and document the effects of services on clients.

Investigating the effects of services on clients requires the collection and analysis of quantitative and/or qualitative data.

Documenting the effects of services on clients provides organisations with information that can be used to improve service delivery, as well as with evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of service delivery.

Investigate effects of service on clients

In addition to clients themselves, some of the people who can provide you with data about the effects of services on clients include:

- clients' family members and carers
- frontline workers
- other professionals and organisations providing services to clients, such as teachers, respite carers or social workers.

Here are some examples of techniques that could be used to investigate the effects of services on clients:

Outcome measurement tools

- **Outcome measurement tools** are instruments that can be used to evaluate the impacts of services on clients.
- **Validated outcome measurement tools** have already been tested for validity and reliability.
- Organisations can develop their own outcome measurement tools but the process can be time-consuming and expensive as this requires specific expertise.
- Examples of validated outcome measurement tools used to evaluate the impact of services on children and families include:
 - Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)
 - Kessler K-10
 - Parental Empowerment and Efficacy Measure

Outcome measurement tools

Instruments that can be used to evaluate the impacts of services on clients.

Validated outcome measurement tools

Outcome measurement tools that have been tested for validity and reliability.



Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interviews with clients and other relevant parties, such as frontline workers, can provide valuable information about the effects of services on clients.• Interviews are a good way of investigating such issues because they allow for detailed questioning and the exploration of complex matters. However, a major disadvantage of conducting interviews is that they are time consuming.
Document reviews and analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Documents such as case notes and client records can be used to investigate the effects of services on clients.• Systematic analysis of case notes and client records can provide information about clients' progress and outcomes.• Case notes and clients' records can also be used to develop case studies to demonstrate the effects of services on clients.

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care has compiled a list of generic patient-reported outcome measures available at: aspirelr.link/acsq-health-care-prom

To ensure the data you are gathering includes the effects of services on all clients, it is best to use multiple techniques with multiple relevant sources, such as clients and frontline workers and other professionals. For example, your investigation might involve:

- interviews with clients
- interviews with frontline workers
- reviews of case notes.

For more information about outcome measurement tools, visit: aspirelr.link/aifs-outcome-measurement-tools

There are important factors to consider when measuring the outcomes of services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities. For more information, visit: aspirelr.link/aifs-indigenous-communities-outcomes

Document effects

When documenting the effects of services on clients, it is important for you to consider the audience who will read the document.

Considering the audience for a document will help you decide its style, tone, content and format.



For example, a single page brief only for internal staff may not need a lot of contextual information, such as how the data was collected and from whom. On the other hand, a report for an external audience may need an introduction to orient the readers.

The documents you produce should be clear and concise. Here are some tips:

- Only include information that the audience needs to know
- Define any words or terms the audience may not be familiar with and avoid jargon
- Be precise and avoid vague terminology
- Avoid *flowery*, that is elaborate and flamboyant, language
- Choose a logical structure for the document
- Use organisational templates where available or, if the documentation will be produced regularly, develop a template for that purpose
- Follow organisational style guides
- Use tables to summarise information
- Use bullet points to make chunks of information easier to read

Be objective

When someone is objective, they demonstrate a lack of favouritism towards one side or another.

When you write objectively, you write about facts not opinion. When writing objectively, you avoid judgements, stereotypes and assumptions.

For example, the following statement is not objective: '60 per cent of our clients responded to the survey; we can assume that the other 40 per cent are likely to be satisfied with the service provided.' The following statement is objective: '60 per cent of our clients responded to the survey. Based on the data available to us, it is unclear why the remaining 40 per cent did not respond.'

In other words, only report what the data says unless you have been asked to consider what you think the data means.

Present quantitative data

You will need to think about the best and most effective way to communicate quantitative data to your audience.

Graphs and charts are a good way of presenting quantitative data, as they make it easier for the audience to digest the information and to see trends and patterns in the data.



Here are some examples of types of graphs and charts that can be used to present quantitative data.

Bar chart

A bar chart is used to compare data across categories.

In this example, data about client satisfaction from three sites (1, 2 and 3) is compared. The numbers on the left indicate the percentage of satisfied clients.



Line graph

A line graph displays trends over time.

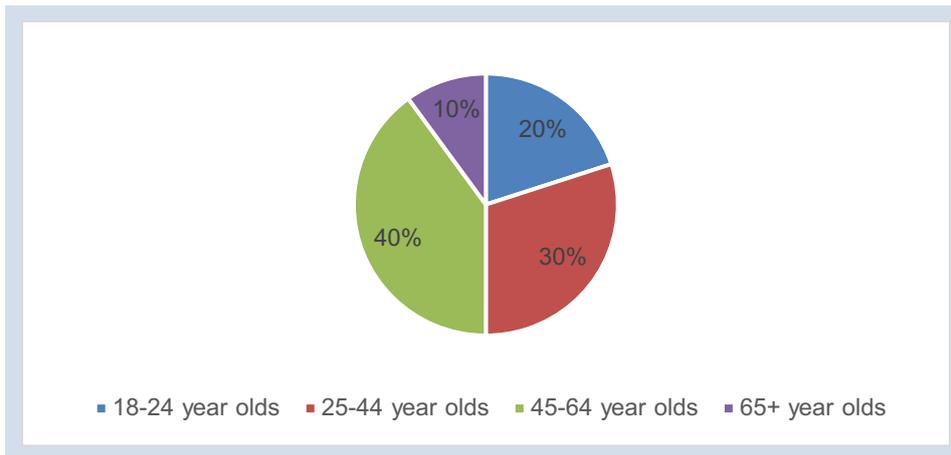
In this example, the line graph indicates trends regarding client satisfaction at three different time points (March, April, May) for two different sites (1 and 2).



Pie chart

A pie chart displays the proportionate contribution of multiple categories to the total.

In this example, the pie chart indicates the proportion of different age groups that responded to a client satisfaction survey.



Example

Investigate and document the effects of services on clients

Pixie-Anne has undertaken an investigation into the effects of Helping Hands' services on clients. She has the results from an outcome measurement tool used to evaluate the effects of a service for young parents, the results of a systematic analysis of the case notes from a home-visiting program and qualitative data from a series of interviews she and her colleagues undertook with workers and clients.

This information now needs to be documented and presented to Helping Hand's director, CEO and board. As the audience she is writing for is familiar with the process that Pixie-Anne and her colleagues have undertaken she only includes a very brief background in her report. She also uses bullet points to make the document easier to read and some basic graphs and charts to present some of the quantitative data.

Stakeholder expectations versus service delivery objectives

It is important to be able to distinguish between stakeholder expectations and service delivery objectives.

Stakeholders are any individuals or groups that are involved in or impacted by the services your organisation provides. All stakeholders have expectations about what and how services should be delivered.

Stakeholders
Anyone who has a 'stake' or interest in a case management plan, service or intervention.



For example:

- clients might expect that an organisation is able to provide support outside business hours
- clients' families might expect that supports will be available in person and online
- workers may expect that clients' family members receive psychosocial support
- partner organisations might expect that an organisation will provide services to adult clients as well as their children.

Service delivery objectives
The targets or goals your organisation intends to achieve.

Service delivery objectives, on the other hand, are the targets or goals your organisation intends to achieve. What your stakeholders expect may not be what your organisation is aiming to achieve. In other words, you may come across instances where stakeholder expectations exceed, conflict or do not align with service delivery objectives.

In some cases, your organisation might amend its objectives to better meet the expectations of stakeholders. However, it is impossible for an organisation to meet all the expectations of every stakeholder and eventually decisions need to be made about which targets and goals can be achieved with the resources that are available.

The objectives of your service should align with the overarching vision and mission of your organisation along with your clients' needs and relevant legislative, ethical and funding requirements.

Where feedback from stakeholders indicates that your service is not meeting clients' needs, or not aligning with legislative, ethical or funding requirements, this needs to be acted on. Where feedback from stakeholders indicates that your service needs to do more, careful consideration will be required to determine whether and how these expectations can be met, given the available resources.

Practice Task 9

Question 1

List three groups of people who can provide useful data about the effects of services on clients.

**Question 2**

A worker has collected data about the effects of services on clients.

The data indicates that 80 per cent of clients are satisfied with service, 15 per cent are dissatisfied and five per cent are unsure whether they are satisfied or dissatisfied.

The data also indicates that most of the people who were dissatisfied with the service were female clients. However, the worker has no data indicating why female clients are more likely to be dissatisfied with the service.

Based on this data, which of the following statements are objective? Tick all that apply.

- Most of our clients are satisfied with the services we provide.
- Of those clients who are dissatisfied with the services we provide, the majority are female.
- Our female clients seem to be more difficult to please.
- Five per cent of clients were unsure when asked about their level of satisfaction with our services.
- The five per cent of clients who were unsure about their level of satisfaction with our services may be cognitively impaired.

Question 3

Describe the difference between stakeholder expectations and service delivery objectives.

2 E

Provide clients and stakeholders with results of service reviews

It is good practice to provide clients and stakeholders with the results of service quality reviews.

Providing information about the results of reviews of service quality helps organisations demonstrate accountability. It also helps to build trust with clients, as it shows that the organisation is committed to improving the services it provides.

The following table gives some examples of mechanisms for providing clients and stakeholders with information about the results of reviews of service quality:

Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your organisation's website is a convenient way of providing information to clients and stakeholders about the results of the review of service quality.• The website could provide a summary of results, as well as links to more detailed documents, such as a brief written report.
Public forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A public forum could be a good way of communicating information about results to clients and their families and carers.• Information could be provided within a brief presentation, followed by a question and answer or discussion session.
Posters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A poster is a useful way of communicating information to clients, especially when it is placed in a location where clients wait or gather, such as in the reception area.• Posters are a good way to communicate information to clients who prefer information to be presented in a visual format.• Text on a poster needs to be minimal and succinct, and the format needs to be visually appealing.
Oral presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A formal oral presentation is one way of providing information to professional stakeholders, such as workers, managers and representatives from funding bodies.• An oral presentation could be delivered during a regular meeting or via video conferencing software.
Brief written report	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A brief written report is another way of providing information to professional stakeholders.• Along with the results of the review, the report could include information about the purpose of the review and the methods used to collect feedback and analyse data.



Dot point summary via email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An emailed dot point summary is another way of providing information to professional stakeholders. • A dot point summary does not include background information but simply outlines key findings from the review. A dot point summary is useful for stakeholders who are familiar with the background to the review and/or have limited time to read the results.
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Depending on who your stakeholders are, it might be beneficial to use multiple mechanisms for providing information about the results of the quality review so that all stakeholders can access the information.

Example

Provide clients and stakeholders with information about reviews of service quality

Pixie-Anne and her colleagues have completed their review of service quality at Helping Hands. The next step is providing their clients and other stakeholders with information about the results of the review.

Some of the clients at Helping Hands have low levels of literacy, so the team works together to develop a poster that primarily describes the results in a visual format. As many clients regularly use the internet, they also provide a synopsis of the results on the Helping Hands website. The website also includes a link to a one-page document that summarises the results in dot point format. This link is emailed to partner organisations and to the two philanthropic organisations that help fund Helping Hands.

Communicate information to others

When deciding what methods your organisation will use to communicate information to clients and stakeholders, remember to consider the needs and preferences of your audience.

Plain English and Easy English are two styles of writing that make information more accessible and user-friendly for diverse audiences.

Here are some questions to consider when providing clients and stakeholders with information about review results:

What levels of literacy does the audience have?

- Information presented in a visual format is useful for people who have low levels of literacy, as is the use of **Plain English**.

Plain English
Language that is clear, short and easy to understand.



Written Easy English

A way of writing that can help people with cognitive disabilities access and understand written language.

Do any clients have cognitive disabilities?

- Clients who have cognitive disabilities might benefit from information that is presented in Written Easy English. A document in **Written Easy English** uses uncomplicated everyday language as well as meaningful and relevant images to help communicate information to the audience.

What is the most convenient method of communication for the audience?

- Professional stakeholders such as workers, managers and professionals from partner organisations are often exceptionally busy, therefore an email that includes a dot point summary may be preferred to an oral presentation.

For more information about the difference between Plain English and Written Easy English, as well as tips on how to write using these styles, visit:

aspirelr.link/plain-and-easy-english-difference

Practice Task 10

Question 1

List two mechanisms that could be used to communicate written information about review results to clients and stakeholders.

Question 2

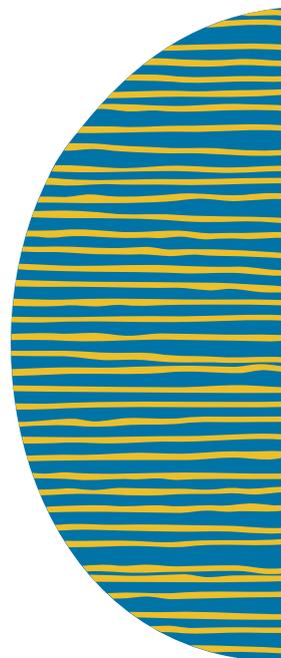
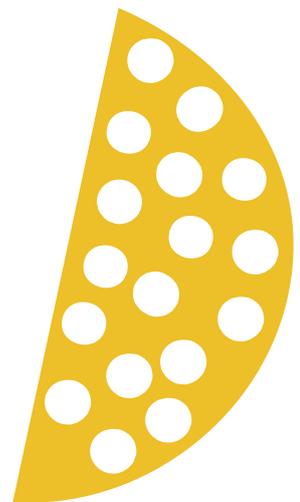
Which of the following types of language would you use to communicate review results to clients with low levels of literacy? Tick all that apply.

- Acronyms
- Common phrases
- Unusual words
- Jargon
- Slang



Summary

- An indicator is used to monitor progress towards the achievement of an outcome.
- Clients and clients' families and carers, as well as workers, can all provide valuable information about service delivery.
- Quantitative data tells us how much, how many or how often; whereas qualitative data tells us about attitudes, perceptions, experiences and behaviours.
- Recommendations should be informed by evidence as they are designed to be persuasive.
- Everyone within an organisation has a responsibility to keep up to date with developments relating to practice.
- Service delivery requirements change over time therefore it is important to ensure staff who are delivering services have the skills and knowledge they need to meet new requirements.
- Organisations have an ethical responsibility to provide service users with a response and a remedy when they make a complaint.
- When documenting the effects of services on clients, it is important to consider the audience who will read the document.
- It is important to be objective when reporting on data; when someone is objective they do not show favouritism towards one side.
- Mechanisms for providing information to clients and stakeholders include online, face-to-face and visual tools.





Learning Checkpoint 2

Monitor and review service delivery against quality framework

Part A

1. Identify one staff feedback mechanism that could be used to monitor service delivery within an organisation.

2. Provide an example of how a clients' needs can change over time.

3. Which of the following actions ensure service delivery procedures are updated to reflect good practice, legislative requirements and client needs? Tick all that apply.

- Regularly checking authoritative sources regarding good and best practice
- Routinely collecting and analysing data regarding client needs
- Having clearly identified roles and responsibilities relating to who reviews, drafts and updates organisational procedures
- Asking all senior staff to contribute to updating service delivery procedures
- Keeping updated on legislative changes that can impact service delivery



- 4.** Explain why the results of a Training Needs Analysis might be useful when identifying the need for staff to develop specific competencies in light of changing service delivery requirements.

- 5.** Describe three ways to identify opportunities for staff to meet changing service delivery requirements.

- 6.** Which of the following justify the use of several feedback mechanisms being used when reviewing service delivery? Tick all that apply.

- Every person should have the opportunity to provide feedback.
- The more mechanisms available, the higher the likelihood that respondents will engage in the process.
- It demonstrates that the organisation is listening to respondents.
- It demonstrates that the organisation is technically competent.
- It helps to ensure transparency of the process.



7. Explain how an organisation’s ethical responsibilities differ when responding to complaints compared with responding to feedback.

8. List two factors that need to be considered when using mechanisms to gather feedback from service users.

9. List two techniques that can be used to investigate the effects of services on clients.



10. Provide three examples of ways to ensure your documentation will be easy for all the different stakeholders to comprehend.

11. Explain why it is important to be able to distinguish between when a service is not meeting service delivery objectives and when a service is not meeting stakeholder expectations.

12. Which of the following groups of people would benefit from Easy English? Tick the correct response.

- Migrants
- People who access information online
- Young people aged 18-25 years
- Academic audiences
- People who have cognitive disabilities



Part B

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

Case study

Benji is a senior project officer at NorthWest Community Services, an organisation that provides a range of services and supports to individuals and families experiencing financial stress, housing instability and homelessness.

Benji is working with a team of senior staff to monitor and review NorthWest Community Services' service delivery against their quality framework. Benji is assisting with the collection and analysis of data for this task.

Senior staff have noted that workplace bullying appears to be a major factor impacting on the quality of service delivery.

1. Explain why interviewing staff would be a good way for Benji to collect information about the issue of workplace bullying.



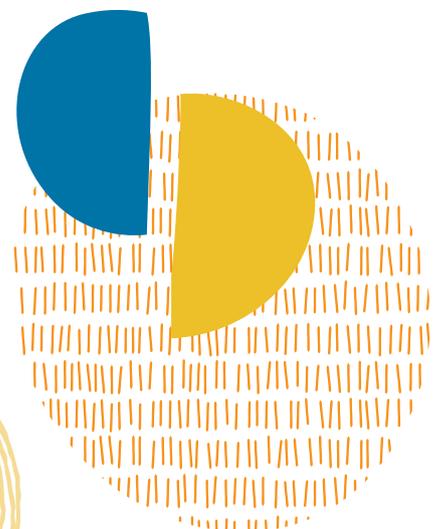
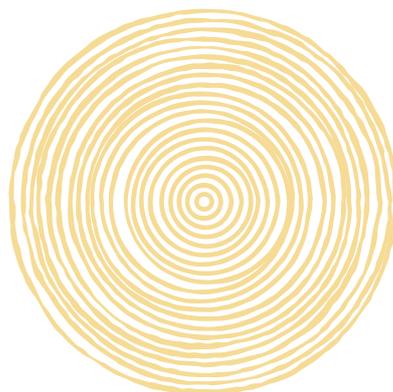
- 2.** Identify two techniques Benji could use to analyse the quantitative data he has collected for the purposes of reviewing service delivery.

- 3.** Describe one method Benji could use to analyse qualitative data collected from interviews with staff.



Topic 3: Plan and implement revised strategies to improve outcomes

- 3A Use review findings to identify threats to quality
- 3B Respond to, investigate and use complaints to improve outcomes
- 3C Design and implement a plan to improve quality and share information with relevant parties



3A Use review findings to identify threats to quality

The results of your review of service delivery can provide your organisation with valuable information about threats to the quality of services.

By regularly monitoring service delivery and the effects of services on clients, your organisation can take a proactive approach to threats, identifying them as they emerge or before they take hold.

Proactive approach

Involves initiating action in preparation for a future threat.

A **proactive approach** to threats is preferable to a **reactive approach**. A reactive approach involves only responding to threats when they have become a serious problem.

Threats to quality

Barriers to quality are issues that are currently impeding the quality of service delivery, whereas threats are emerging or potential risks to the quality of service delivery in the future.

Reactive approach

Involves responding to a threat only when it has become a serious problem.

Here are some examples of threats to service quality:

High turnover of staff	High turnover of staff can have a negative impact on employee morale and productivity. Losing experienced staff can mean that it takes longer for new staff to develop hands-on skills and knowledge.
Inadequate/ ineffective communication	Communication within health and community services organisations is essential to quality service delivery. This includes top-down communication (from senior staff to employees), bottom-up communication (from employees to senior staff) and communication between clients and workers. Inadequate communication can undermine service quality and seriously impact upon continuous improvement efforts.
Resistance to change	Resistance to change among employees can pose a threat to the quality of services because it may represent an inability or unwillingness to meet evolving requirements and client needs.
Incorrect or inconsistent implementation of policies and procedures	Organisational policies and procedures are designed to ensure organisations meet their legal and ethical responsibilities towards clients, workers and members of the community. Where policies and procedures are being incorrectly applied, or not applied consistently, it poses a risk to the quality of services provided.



Insufficient equipment	Equipment that does not work properly, or is not fit for purpose, poses a threat to service quality.
Inadequate policies and procedures for managing complaints	Complaints are a form of feedback that can be used to enhance service quality. If complaints are not properly managed it can be difficult for organisations to continuously improve.

How to identify threats to quality using review findings

Some threats to quality will be obvious from the data you have collected, while others will be subtle and harder to detect.

For example, the results from surveys of staff indicate that workers are frustrated with a new procedure, and the results from surveys of managers indicate that staff are being resistant to following that same new procedure.

The threat in this case could be resistance to change. The procedure has been developed to ensure quality service delivery and if the staff who are responsible for following the procedure are reluctant to follow it this poses a threat to quality.

However, the threat could also be poor communication; for example, perhaps the reason why the new procedure is required has not been adequately explained to staff.

This is where multiple methods of data collection can be beneficial, because while a survey might be able to tell you what is happening, it might not be able to tell you why it is happening. If you have conducted interviews with staff and managers you are likely to have more in-depth information about thoughts, feelings and experiences. This may make it easier for you to identify the true threat.

Another way of identifying threats to service quality is by sharing the findings of your review with your colleagues. Their unique perspectives and experiences may make it easier for them to identify specific threats that are not obvious to you.

Example

Use review findings to identify threats to quality

Darnell works as a manager at Chance4Change, an organisation that provides clinic- and home-based support services to families at risk of involvement in statutory child protection services.



Darnell and his colleagues have undertaken a review of Chance4Change’s service delivery against their quality framework. They are now reviewing the findings to identify threats to quality service delivery.

Administrative data collected during the review indicates increased staff turnover at Chance4Change. Surveys conducted with workers indicate poor internal communication since the introduction of a range of new policies and procedures. Both factors pose a threat to the quality of services Chance4Change provides to clients.

Practice Task 11

Question 1

List three possible threats to service quality.

Question 2

Which of the following reasons explain why using multiple methods of data collection helps identify threats to quality? Tick the correct response.

- Multiple methods of data collection make data analysis more straightforward.
- Some people are better at analysing quantitative data.
- Multiple methods of data collection make it easier to detect subtle threats to quality.
- Some people do not know how to analyse qualitative data.
- Stakeholders expect services to use multiple methods of data collection.

3B

Respond to, investigate and use complaints to improve outcomes

Complaints are a form of feedback that organisations can use to improve the services they provide.

Organisations can demonstrate accountability based on data collected through complaints mechanisms. When an organisation is accountable, it takes responsibility for what it has done or what it is supposed to do.

When organisations receive complaints they should respond to them promptly and investigate them in an objective, fair and confidential way.

Complaints and the law

Every person has the right to make a complaint and there are a range of legal concepts, roles and organisations that health and community services need to be aware of when managing and responding to complaints.

Here are some examples of legal concepts, roles and organisations relevant to complaints processes in health and community services organisations:

Ombudsmen and Health Care Complaints Commissioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ombudsmen are independent agencies that help resolve disagreements between individuals and government departments, agencies and organisations.• There is an Ombudsman in every state and territory of Australia. Every state and territory in Australia also has a Health Care Complaints Commissioner/Ombudsman.• Complaints about the actions of Australian Government agencies, and some private sector organisations overseen by the Australian government, can be made to the Commonwealth Ombudsman.• Links to organisations that manage health complaints, including state- and territory-based Complaints Commissioners are available at: aspirelr.link/health-complaints-organisations	Ombudsman An official who is appointed to investigate an individual's complaint against an organisation.
Advocates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocates represent the views, rights and interests of individuals and groups, especially representing vulnerable people and people who are unable, or find it difficult, to advocate for themselves.• Advocates can play a role in the complaints process by supporting a person to make a complaint, directly to an organisation or to another body such as the Human Rights Commission, and by representing their interests during the resolution process.	Advocate An individual who speaks up for a person to defend their rights.



<p>Advocates (cont.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information about disability advocacy is available at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - aspirelr.link/ndis-disability-advocate
<p>The Australian Human Rights Commission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) has statutory responsibilities under federal human rights and anti-discrimination laws. • The AHRC investigates complaints about discrimination and breaches of human rights. • Members of the public can make complaints to the Australian Human Rights Commission about unlawful sex, race, disability and age discrimination they have experienced when accessing or using services. • For more information about the Human Rights Commission’s complaints process, visit: aspirelr.link/complaint-process
<p>Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) deals with freedom of information, privacy and information policy issues. • Organisations are legally required to follow the rules outlined in the <i>Privacy Act 1988</i> (Cth) when collecting, handling and storing clients’ personal information. • If a client thinks that an organisation has mishandled their personal information, they can lodge a complaint with the OAIC. • For more information, visit: aspirelr.link/oaic-handle-foi-complaint

Video: The Victorian Health Complaints Commissioner

This video explains how the Victorian Health Complaints Commissioner works with members of the public who have complaints: aspirelr.link/yt-vic-health-complaints-commissioner



Respond to complaints

Information, such as the procedures for clients to lodge complaints and which workers are responsible for which aspects of the complaints management process, is typically included in a complaints management policy.

In some states and territories organisations are required by law to have a written complaints policy. For example, in Victoria all government funded services must have written policies outlining how they will deal with complaints.

Some organisations also have a complaints management system that incorporates complaints management policies and procedures, a method for recording complaints and other relevant resources.



Any worker responding to complaints should be familiar with their organisation's complaints management policy and complaints management system.

Principles for complaints

Regardless of the organisational policy, every complaint to an organisation should be dealt with promptly in a respectful and courteous manner. The complaint process should be easy and straightforward for users.

When making a complaint, people want:

- to be heard and understood
- to be respected
- an explanation
- an apology
- prompt action.

Some organisations employ complaints handling officers to assist with the process of responding to complaints.

Common principles underpinning the effective handling of complaints by organisations are outlined below:

Responsiveness	Complaints should be acknowledged in a timely manner and addressed promptly. The person making the complaint should be kept informed throughout the complaints process.
Objectivity and fairness	Complaints should be managed in a fair and objective way.
Confidentiality	Information relating to the person making the complaint, and any person relevant to the complaint, must be kept confidential.
Remedy	If a complaint is found to be legitimate the organisation should provide a remedy.
Review	There should be internal mechanisms for reviewing or appealing an organisation's response to a complaint. The person making the complaint should be informed about these internal mechanisms as well as about external mechanisms for review and/or appeal.

Source: www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au/Publications/Documents/guidelines/Effective-handling-of-complaints-made-to-your-organisation.pdf

Where a complaint cannot be resolved through an organisation's internal complaint mechanism, legal complaint mechanisms are an option for clients.

The legal complaint mechanism that a person uses will depend on what the complaint is about, who the complaint relates to and their location.

For example, complaints about discrimination should be directed to the Australian Human Rights Commission, and complaints about health services should be directed to state- and territory-based health complaints commissioners.

Investigate complaints

Not every complaint made to your organisation will need to be investigated. Some complaints can be resolved relatively easily via a conversation between, for example, a client and a worker or a client and a manager.

Investigations are only required where a complaint cannot be resolved or the complaint indicates systemic issues within the organisation that require further examination.

The table below outlines in greater detail the ten steps involved in complaints investigation and resolution processes:

1. Assess the complaint	Clarify the issues of the complainant (the person making the complaint) and what resolution they are seeking.
2. Seek resolution	Where possible and appropriate seek a resolution. If a resolution is reached, document the action. Complaints that are resolved at this point do not need to be investigated unless they indicate systemic issues within the organisation that require further examination.
3. Select an appropriate investigation approach	If a complaint cannot be resolved, determine the action required. There may be options other than formal investigation. The appropriate investigation approach will depend on statutory requirements, the nature of the issue, and the likely outcome of the investigation. Wherever possible, complaints should be resolved without requiring a formal investigation.
4. Plan the investigation	Define the issues that need to be investigated and develop an investigation plan.
5. Ensure proper powers and authority	The person who is investigating the complaint must have the relevant authority to conduct the investigation, to make decisions and resolve the complaint – or have access to a person with this authority.
6. Obtain evidence	Gather sufficient reliable information that allows you to prove or disprove matters relevant to the issue that is being investigated.
7. Reconsider resolution	Consider whether resolution is now possible.
8. Reporting and recommendations	Document how the investigation was undertaken, as well as any relevant facts, conclusions, findings and recommendations. Recommendations could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remedies for the complainant • actions to improve service delivery • actions to address inappropriate conduct by a worker.



<p>9. Make a decision about the complaint and action to be taken</p>	<p>Refer the report to the person authorised to make decisions about complaints.</p> <p>After a decision has been made by the authorised person, implement the agreed action and follow up to ensure the action happens.</p>
<p>10. Inform the parties</p>	<p>When the investigation has been completed, the person who has made the complaint should be informed about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the decision, and adequate reasons for the decision • changes or actions resulting from the complaint • a remedy, where appropriate, which might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an apology - reconsideration of a decision - an offer of non-financial assistance - changed policies or procedures - action to modify the behaviour of a worker who the complaint was about • information on seeking independent internal or external review; for example, through the Ombudsman.

Source: www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au/Publications/Documents/guidelines/Effective-handling-of-complaints-made-to-your-organisation.pdf

Use complaints as feedback to improve outcomes

Client complaints provide a useful insight into potential service improvements because clients can sometimes recognise problems that the organisation is unable or unwilling to see.

Example

Respond to, investigate and use complaints to improve outcomes

A new hospital has opened in a large regional town. The hospital has great facilities and staff are receiving a lot of positive feedback about their professional and welcoming approach to patients and their families.

After a week or so, multiple complaints are received from mothers with young children who are having difficulty accessing the building. The old hospital had simple sliding automatic doors, but the new hospital has revolving doors that are more energy efficient. However, the revolving doors are not big enough to accommodate prams. The only way women with prams can access the building is by using a different entrance that is on the other side of the building.



Approaches to analysing complaints

Approaching complaints on a case-by-case basis can lead to improvements in service outcomes. For example, imagine that a client complains about a specific worker spending too much time on their phone when they are providing home-care services. The complaint might lead to the worker being asked to follow organisational policy and only use their phone if there is an emergency during a home-care visit. This could lead to an improvement in outcomes for the client as a stronger relationship develops between the client and the worker and, as a result, the client feels more confident about communicating their needs.

This is not the only way complaints can lead to improvements in service outcomes. Analysing all complaints received by an organisation can also lead to improvements in service outcomes.

For example, perhaps you work in an organisation that has multiple sites. Each site has received one or two complaints about workers spending too much time on their phones during home-care visits. The managers of each of the workers who were complained about have reminded them about the organisational policy regarding phone use.

Your analysis of the complaints register reveals that multiple workers who were approached about this issue said they were not aware there was a policy relating to phone use during work hours. This indicates that there is an issue beyond the conduct of individual workers; there is a communication issue within the organisation which needs to be addressed.

One potential solution to this problem might be to include information about using phones while working at the induction presentation for new staff, along with a copy of the policy in their induction pack.

This could lead to workers having greater clarity about the policy regarding phone use during work time, reduce the number of complaints from clients and enhance opportunities for positive worker-client relationships.

The Health Consumers Alliance of SA (HCASA) recommends four strategies that organisations can use to make better use of complaints to drive quality improvement.

<p>1. Improve the collection of complaints</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure clients have clear information about the complaints process and how to make a complaint. • Develop appropriate policies and processes to support workers to receive complaints.
<p>2. Improve the analysis of complaints</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish or refine the system for logging complaints to make it easier to analyse the information. • Ensure complaints are recorded in a consistent way so the data is reliable.



3. Improve actioning of complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish clear procedures for staff to manage complaints and provide remedies.• Put into place time-sensitive target response protocols, such as how much time it should take to acknowledge receipt of a complaint, respond to the person making the complaint, begin the investigation process etc.
4. Communicate with complainants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure early identification of the expectations of the person making the complaint.• Inform the person making the complaint about any changes that are being made as a result of their complaint.

Source: Health Consumers Alliance of South Australia (2020)

Practice Task 12

Question 1

Explain how the Privacy Act is relevant to an organisation's legal responsibilities regarding client complaints.

Question 2

Explain what response people want when they make a complaint to an organisation.



Question 3

Number the first five steps in a complaints investigation and resolution process.

	Plan the investigation
	Ensure proper powers and authority
	Assess the complaint
	Seek resolution
	Select an appropriate investigation approach

Question 4

List two strategies that organisations can use to make complaints contribute to quality improvement processes.

3C

Design and implement a plan to improve quality and share information with relevant parties

To implement strategies for improving outcomes, you will need to develop a plan.

Plans for developing and improving the quality of services are typically referred to as quality improvements plans or QIP. A **quality improvement plan** is a specific and detailed work plan that is developed to improve the performance or outcomes of a service.

The plan must be developed in consultation with stakeholders and shared with relevant parties.

The plan you develop to improve the quality of service your organisation provides should include the following information:

- The goals: what your organisation wants to achieve
- The strategies: how your organisation is going to achieve the goals
- The achievements: the measures of success for each goal

Here is some information about developing goals and strategies:

Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The plan should include both immediate and long-term goals. Immediate goals can be achieved at once, whereas long-term goals require more time to be achieved. A long-term goal, for example, might be achievable within six months to a year, or longer.• The goals should be based on what you have identified regarding the quality of the services your organisation provides.• The goals should align with your organisation's vision, mission and guiding principles.
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is likely to be a range of strategies that feasibly could lead to the achievement of each goal.• Consulting with stakeholders about the strategies used to achieve goals is especially useful. Workers, team leaders, managers and experts in the field will all have ideas about feasible strategies for achieving goals.• Published case studies and other evidence such as journal articles may also provide insight into what strategies can be used to achieve specific goals.

Quality improvement plan

A specific and detailed work plan that is developed to improve the performance or outcomes of a service.

Here are some examples of measures for evaluating the success of immediate and long-term goals:

Goal type	Goal	Measures of success
Immediate goals	To develop a Code of Conduct for workers, in collaboration with key stakeholders, which clearly outlines behavioural expectations including the unacceptability of bullying behaviours	A Code of Conduct, approved by the worker reference group, the Senior Directors Committee and the CEO, is available on the intranet.
	To establish a client reference group that can work with our organisation to improve service quality and meet community needs	A client reference group comprising six current or former clients has been established and the Terms of Reference have been drafted.
	To increase the number of ways clients can provide feedback and make complaints about our service	Our organisation now has three methods for clients to provide feedback and make complaints: an online form, a suggestion box and a dedicated email account.
Long-term goals	To increase clients' satisfaction with the process of transitioning out of the service within one year	Client survey data shows a 25% increase in the proportion of clients who report satisfaction with the process of transitioning out of the service.
	To reduce the percentage of complaints relating to worker-client interactions within 18 months	Complaints register data shows a 15% reduction in the proportion of complaints from clients that relate to worker-client interactions
	To increase the percentage of workers who are satisfied with organisational leadership within six months	Annual staff survey results show a 20% increase in worker satisfaction with organisational leadership.

NB: These are examples only. The goals your organisation sets will depend upon what the organisation and stakeholders view as priorities for service improvement.

Other information that could be included in your plan includes:

- criteria that the goal relates to; for example, a quality standard
- who is responsible for the goal and/or strategy
- when the goal should be completed by; for example, a due date
- progress notes.

Some organisations will have a pre-existing quality improvement plan developed by a government agency or funding body that they are required to use.



Writing goals

According to the SMART model, goals should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound.

Specific	Goals should be clear and precise: who, what, where and when?
Measurable	Goals should be quantifiable: how many, how much?
Achievable	Goals should be achievable: how will you accomplish it? What steps need to be taken to accomplish the objective?
Realistic	Goals should be practical: is there the budget to do this? Is there enough time to do this? Do you, or your team, have the knowledge and skills to do this?
Time bound	Goals should have a deadline: what needs to be achieved and by when?

Goals that are written according to the SMART model are easy to communicate to stakeholders. Goals that are achievable and are relevant to the everyday work that staff undertake can be a motivation for improvement, especially when progress towards those goals can be measured.

Consult with stakeholders

The process you use for involving stakeholders in the development of a quality improvement plan will depend on a range of factors including the nature of the service provided, such as clinic-based versus home-based; and the preferences of clients, such as online versus face-to-face involvement.

Here are some examples of how you could consult with stakeholders when designing the plan:

- Conducting an online survey with clients to help identify what they view as priority goals
- Asking a client representative group to review the draft plan and provide feedback
- Undertaking a focus group with workers to brainstorm strategies for achieving goals
- Setting up a meeting with workers and managers to discuss the viability of potential strategies for achieving goals
- Setting up a meeting with senior staff, representatives from funding bodies and other senior stakeholders to present the draft plan and obtain feedback



Example

Design and implement a plan to improve quality and share information with relevant parties

Darnell is working with his colleagues to design and implement a plan to improve the quality of services provided by Chance4Change. As part of the process of designing the plan, Darnell and his colleagues need to consult with a range of stakeholders including clients of Chance4Change. He develops an online survey that current and past clients are invited to complete so they can provide feedback on the plan, especially regarding the draft goals.

Implement the plan

A good plan that is poorly implemented will not be effective. Understanding barriers to and facilitators of effective implementation can help ensure the smooth and successful roll-out of a plan.

Here are some key factors to consider when implementing a plan:

Leadership	<p>The effective implementation of any workplace plan is strongly determined by the leadership capabilities of organisational managers.</p> <p>Managers and team leaders need to have the skills to handle situations where there is resistance to change.</p>
Resourcing	<p>The plan may require a budget for resources such as staff training, upgraded IT, or the purchase of new equipment.</p> <p>Workers can lose faith in a plan that does not have the resources required to implement the strategies.</p>
Staff responsibilities	<p>People who are responsible for a goal or strategy need to understand their role and be able to take ownership of the goal or strategy.</p> <p>In some cases, it may be preferable to assign goals and strategies to individuals rather than teams to ensure clear personal accountability.</p>
Managing change	<p>Quality improvements may require workers to change the way they work. Cultural issues within the organisation may need to be addressed. For example, where a plan requires workers to work more collaboratively and an organisation does not have a strong culture of collaboration, deliberate attempts to build a more collaborative culture may be required.</p>

Source: www.managers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/CHK-259-Implementing-Strategy.pdf



Provide information about the plan to relevant parties

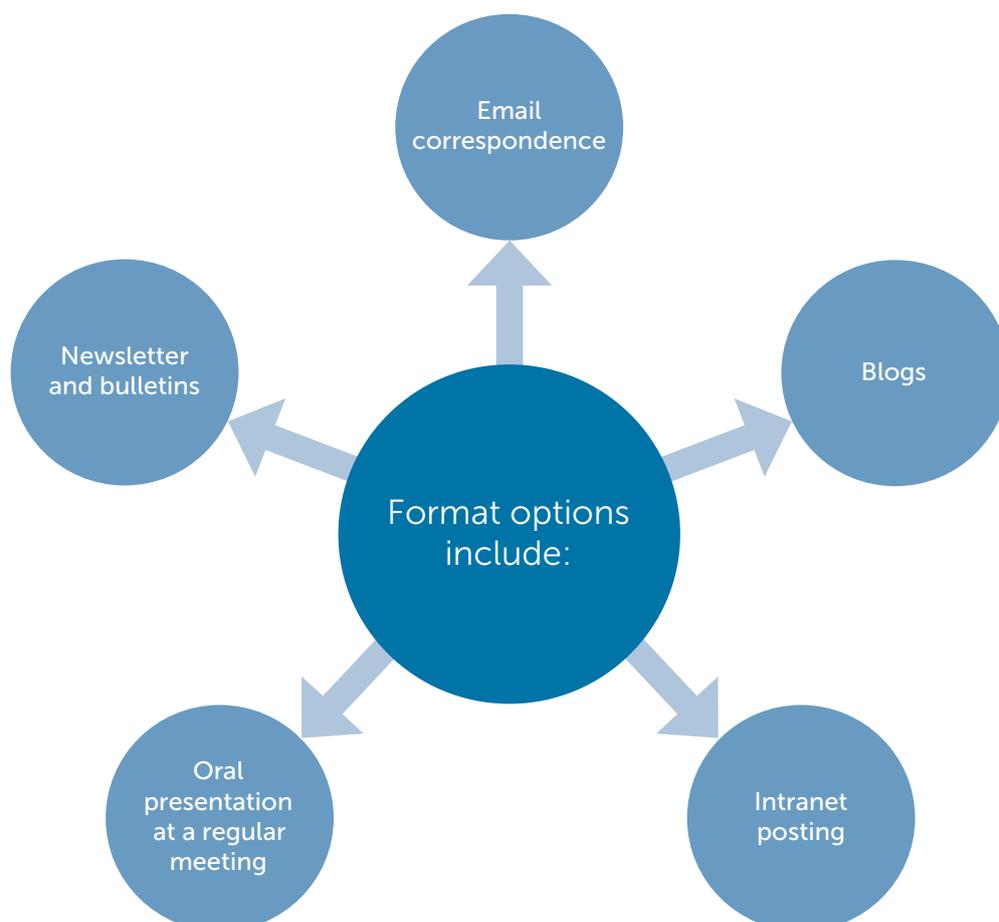
Once the plan has been finalised and approved, it is important to provide information about it to relevant parties.

Examples of relevant parties who should receive information about the plan, both goals and strategies, include:

- frontline workers
- team leaders
- managers
- clients
- funding bodies.

Communicating the plan to frontline workers is especially important to ensure they are familiar with and committed to the quality improvement plan as part of their everyday workplace activities.

The information should be provided in a format that meets the needs and preferences of the relevant parties.





You may need to use multiple communication channels to meet the diverse needs and preferences of the relevant parties; for example, email for workers, oral presentation for fundings bodies, pamphlet for older clients etc.

Practice Task 13

Question 1

Describe what information should be included in a quality improvement plan.

Question 2

Which of the following factors are key considerations when implementing a plan?
Tick all that apply.

- Leadership
- Resourcing
- Centralisation
- Staff responsibilities
- Managing change



Question 3

List one strategy an organisation could use to consult with workers about a quality improvement plan.

Question 4

List two ways of sharing information about the quality improvement plan with frontline workers.



Summary

- Barriers to quality are issues that are currently impeding the quality of service delivery, whereas threats are emerging or potential risks to the quality of service delivery in the future.
- Some threats to quality will be obvious from the data you have collected, while others will be subtle and harder to detect.
- Client complaints provide a useful insight into potential service improvements because clients sometimes recognise problems that the organisation is unable or unwilling to see.
- Every complaint to an organisation should be dealt with promptly in a respectful and courteous manner.
- Investigations into complaints should be objective, fair and confidential.
- Immediate goals can be achieved at once, whereas long-term goals require more time to be achieved, such as six months to a year or longer.
- According to the SMART model, goals should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound.
- Implementation is the process of putting a plan into effect; a good plan that is poorly implemented will not be effective.
- Communicating the plan to frontline workers is especially important to ensure they are familiar with and committed to the quality improvement plan as part of their everyday workplace activities.



Learning Checkpoint 3

Plan and implement revised strategies to improve outcomes

Part A

1. Briefly outline why a high turnover of staff can have a negative impact on service quality.

2. What role does the Australian Human Rights Commission play when it receives complaints from clients about health and community services organisations.

3. Which of the following are common principles underpinning the effective handling of complaints by organisations? Tick all that apply.

- Objectivity
- Fairness
- Sympathy
- Confidentiality
- Collaboration



- 4.** Describe how the SMART acronym is used when designing a quality improvement plan.

- 5.** A group of managers are implementing a plan to improve the quality of the services delivered by their organisation. As part of the implementation, they need to assign responsibilities for specific goals and strategies.

Explain why it would be useful to the group to assign goals and strategies to individuals rather than teams.

- 6.** List two strategies that an organisation could use to consult with clients about a quality improvement plan.



7. Explain why multiple communication channels might be needed when organisations are providing parties with information about a quality improvement plan and processes.

Part B

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

Case study

Frankie works as the manager of a playgroup initiative at a community services organisation that provides a range of services to parents of children with disabilities.

One of Frankie's responsibilities is to respond to and investigate complaints made to the organisation by participants in the playgroup.

A parent named Joe has lodged a complaint via the organisation's online feedback form. Joe says that he registered to participate in a playgroup but was not told the playgroup had been cancelled. As a result, he wasted an hour getting to and from the playgroup on a very hot day with a grumpy toddler.

Frankie acknowledges the complaint by sending Joe an email. She then investigates the complaint and now needs to get back to him to explain the outcome.



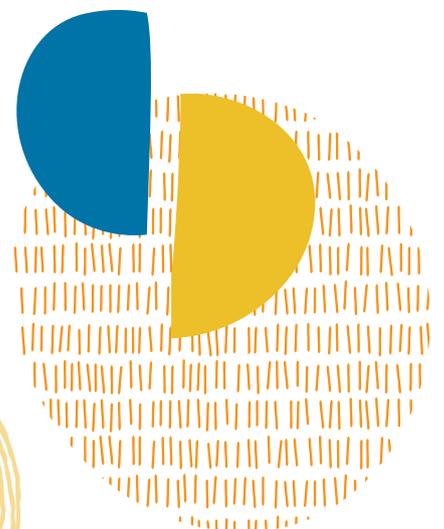
- 1.** Now the investigation is completed, what information should Frankie provide to Joe?

- 2.** Explain how Frankie would know if the problem Joe identified is a broader problem within the organisation that needs to be addressed.



Topic 4: Ensure the continuous improvement of service standards

- 4A Ensure revised service standards incorporate stakeholder expectations
- 4B Establish procedures to check that appropriate practice is carried out
- 4C Regularly promote, model and demonstrate good practice



4A

Ensure revised service standards incorporate stakeholder expectations

Service standards should incorporate stakeholder expectations and available resources and should be communicated regularly to stakeholders.

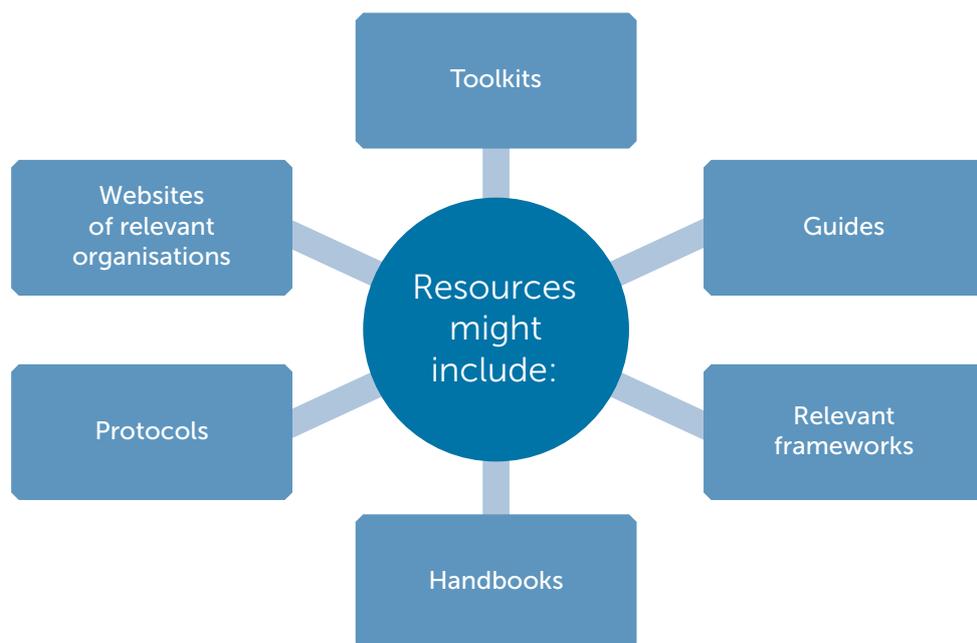
Service standards define a level of performance that is appropriate and achievable. Stakeholders are critical to the process of developing service standards because the standards should reflect stakeholder expectations.

Regularly communicating service standards and good practice to stakeholders ensures that everyone providing and receiving services has a shared understanding about the meaning of *quality* in service delivery.

Although not all stakeholder expectations can be met, as much as possible service standards should incorporate stakeholder expectations, including the expectations of clients and the broader community.

Stakeholder expectations may change over time, which is why ongoing monitoring and review of service delivery is essential and why consultation with stakeholders is a critical aspect of this process.

Service standards should also include available resources. Hyperlinks to resources can be included in online documents that outline service standards.





Communicate service standards and good practice to all stakeholders

Effective **communication** results in shared understanding. The four main categories of communication are:

Verbal communication	The exchange of information through sounds and words
Nonverbal communication	The exchange of information through nonverbal means, such as body language
Written communication	The exchange of information through written symbols
Visual communication	The exchange of information through visual content such as charts, graphs and photographs

Communication
Verbal or written exchange of information, news or ideas.

Individuals have different communication needs depending upon factors such as the language they speak, cultural background, age and abilities.

When communicating standards and practice, important stakeholders include workers, clients, families and carers, volunteers and funding bodies.

Regular communication is important as service standards and practice expectations change over time, and as new clients and workers start at the service.

Communicate standards and practice to workers

Several factors will influence the communication methods used to convey information to workers including available resources, timeframes, geographical location and workers' language and literacy skills.

Here are some methods that could be used to communicate service standards and good practice to workers:

Team meetings	Team leaders and managers can communicate services standards and good practice to workers during regular team meetings.
Oral presentations	Senior staff, such as the managing Director or CEO, can communicate information about service standards and good practice via oral presentations at formal events such as staff conferences.
Intranet	Information about service standards and good practice should be available to workers on the organisation's intranet.
Webinars	A webinar is a seminar or presentation that is hosted online via video conferencing software. Webinars are a useful way of sharing information with workers who work remotely and/or in multiple different sites.

Webinar
A seminar, workshop or presentation that is hosted online via video conferencing software.



Videos	Short information videos could be developed when new service standards are introduced. All-in-one video platforms such as Vimeo can be used for this purpose.
Induction resources	Hard copy resources that outline service standards can be provided to staff at induction. Links to intranet pages that outline service standards and good practice could also be provided to new staff during induction.
Chat tool apps	Chat tool apps such as Slack and Microsoft Teams can be used to communicate information to workers about service standards and good practice. Chat tool apps are typically viewed as more efficient than email because they allow multiple people to communicate with each other simultaneously.
Newsletters	Some organisations email newsletters to staff on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis to inform them about important events, meetings and professional development opportunities. These newsletters could be used to communicate information about service standards and good practice to workers.

Where an organisation has teams that work remotely, special considerations may need to be made to ensure effective communication about service standards and good practice. For example, online streaming of oral presentations can enable remote teams to participate.

Communicate with clients

As when communicating with workers, the communication methods used to convey information to clients will depend on availability of resources, timeframes, location and clients' language and literacy skills.

Here are some of the methods that could be used to communicate service standards and good practice to clients:

Verbal communication	When clients start at a service, workers can verbally communicate information about service standards and good practice to them.
Brochures, pamphlets and information sheets	Resources such as brochures, pamphlets and information sheets can be used to provide information about service standards and good practice to clients. These resources could be provided to clients in hard-copy format and/or online.
Posters	Posters in areas where clients wait and/or gather, such as a waiting room or reception area, can provide information about service standards and good practice.
Organisation website	Information about service standards and good practice can be provided on the organisation's website; some organisations provide this information in the <i>About Us</i> section of their website.



Video

A video featuring a staff member from the organisation explaining service standards and good practice can be uploaded to organisation's website.

It is important to ensure that frontline workers, and other staff members communicating with clients, have the skills and knowledge required to communicate information to people with disabilities including:

- people who are blind/people with low vision
- people who are deaf/people who are hard-of-hearing
- people with a cognitive impairment.

For more information about communicating with someone who is blind or has low vision, visit: aspirelr.link/communicating-effectively

For more information about communicating with someone who is deaf or hard-of-hearing, visit: aspirelr.link/deafnav-communication

For information about communicating with an older person with cognitive impairment, visit: aspirelr.link/communicate-cognitive-impairment

Example

Ensure revised service standards incorporate stakeholder expectations and are communicated regularly

Mid Coast Health provides a range of health services to a regional community, including primary health care and allied health care services.

The service uses a variety of methods to communicate service standards and good practice to all stakeholders, including clients.

Mid Coast Health has designed a poster outlining service standards that is displayed in the waiting room and clinicians' rooms. It also has a brochure at reception that outlines service standards.

The CEO of Mid Coast Health features in a video designed for clients that outlines the organisation's service standards, along with the meaning of good practice within the service.



Communicate with other stakeholders

Other stakeholders who would benefit from being provided with regular information about service standards and good practice include families, carers, volunteers and funding bodies.

Here are some ideas about methods of communication with these stakeholders:

Families and carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workers can use verbal communication to inform families and carers about service standards and good practice.• Information can be provided to families and carers in brochures and pamphlets.• Families and carers can be directed to the organisation's website for information about service standards and good practice.• Information may need to be translated, or interpreters used, for effective communication with families and carers who have limited proficiency in English.
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include volunteers in regular team meetings, webinars, workshops and all-staff conferences to ensure they receive information about service standards and good practice.• Provide volunteers with information about service standards and good practice during volunteer induction activities.• Direct volunteers to resources on the intranet that explain service standards and good practice.
Funding bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask funding bodies about the best way to communicate information about service standards and good practice. Tailor communications according to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- their preferred format- the level of detail required- how often they would like to receive information- who at the funding body should receive the information.• Develop case studies to describe how service standards and good practice guidelines are being implemented and to show the impact of the standards and guidelines on clients.

Source: <https://explore.fundingcentre.com.au/help-sheets/funder-relationships>



Practice Task 14

Question 1

List two types of resources that could be included in an organisation's service standards.

Question 2

List two verbal communication methods an organisation can use to communicate service standards and good practice to stakeholders.

Question 3

Which of the following are circumstances where a chat tool app would be effective when communicating information to stakeholders? Tick all that apply.

- When multiple people need to communicate simultaneously
- When one person wants to communicate with one other person
- When one person wants to communicate with multiple people
- When multiple people need to communicate with one person
- When multiple people need to communicate with each other at the same time



Question 4

Suggest how organisations can ensure that stakeholder expectations continue to be incorporated into service standards given that they will change over time?

4B

Establish procedures to check that appropriate practice is carried out

To ensure the quality of service delivery, organisations need procedures to confirm appropriate practices are being carried out.

Organisations have various ways of checking to make sure appropriate practices are being used and that policies, processes and plans are being applied correctly and consistently. These quality assurance processes differ according to the service type, however all organisations have at least some common processes, such as those relating to workplace health and safety.

Here are some examples of procedures used by organisations to check that appropriate practices are being carried out:

Performance reviews	These are used to assess employees' current practice and future goals. Performance reviews can be used to check employees' understanding of good practice and evaluate how they implement policies and procedures.
Observations	Observation of workers by coaches, mentors, team leaders and other staff with relevant expertise can be undertaken to check that workers are using appropriate practices.
Routine evaluations	Findings from routine evaluations of programs and services can be used to ensure appropriate practices are being used.
Team meetings	These can provide a forum for workers to discuss the practices they are using and managers can use these meetings as an opportunity to remind workers about good practice.
Client feedback and complaints	Routine reviews of client feedback and complaints can be used to identify circumstances where insufficient or inappropriate practices are occurring.
Audits	Audits of service delivery records can be undertaken to ensure practices are appropriate.
Self-reflection and self-assessment tools	These can be used by workers to evaluate their own practices and report back to their peers and/or managers on areas for improvement.
Supervision	Supervision can be used as a means of checking the appropriateness of practices, especially for recent graduates who are new to the field.
Whistleblowing procedures	These make it possible for people to report serious misconduct without being reprimanded or punished.

Quality assurance for different types of services

Quality assurance processes in health services are often quite different to quality assurance processes in community services.

For example, quality assurance processes in health services need to account for issues such as infection prevention and control or medication safety. Processes around infection control and medication safety are irrelevant in most community services environments. Quality assurance processes for hospitals can be especially comprehensive and complex.

Quality assurance processes are just as important in the community services sector; however, the health sector historically has had more robust systems for quality assurance. Quality assurance processes in the community services sector are now becoming more prominent in response to changing community expectations, funding requirements and cultural change in the sector.

Although some quality assurance processes used in the health sector are irrelevant in the community services sector, the two sectors also have some common basic procedures. For example, processes for monitoring issues such as workplace bullying and harassment will be relevant in both sectors.

Example

Establish procedures to check that appropriate practice is carried out

Mid Coast Health operates from a shared building that also houses two community services organisations: a small financial counselling service and an advocacy service for adults with disabilities.

The three organisations have different quality assurance processes. Mid Coast Health has quality assurance processes relating to issues such as infection control and medication safety. These processes are irrelevant to the financial counselling and advocacy services that are located in the same building.

Because Mid Coast Health has a more complex structure than the two community services, they rely upon a larger range of quality assurance processes. Most of the quality assurance processes used by the small financial counselling service rely upon direct observation and self-assessment.



Practice Task 15

Question 1

List three procedures used in the health and community services sectors to check that appropriate practice is being carried out.

Question 2

Briefly describe one example of the different quality assurance processes in health services when compared to community services.

4C

Regularly promote, model and demonstrate good practice

You can play a key role in promoting, modelling and demonstrating good practice to workers.

There are a range of ways you can promote, model and demonstrate good practice to workers including how you work with colleagues, how you work with clients, how you respond to conflict and feedback and your approach and attitudes to change.

The workplaces where health and community services employees are based are typically busy, complex and can be stressful. Workplace leaders and managers who are committed to continuous improvement will discuss issues with workers and incorporate changes into strategies as required.

Here are some ways you can promote, model and demonstrate good practice to workers:

Work collaboratively with others and share expertise	Collaboration is essential in dynamic environments such as health and community services workplaces. People who work collaboratively share information with each other, think deeply about issues and consider alternative viewpoints, and engage in problems and solutions rather than waiting to see what happens.
Respond constructively to feedback	Feedback is essential in an organisation that aims for continuous improvement. Be open-minded about feedback you receive and thank people for giving you feedback, even when you do not agree with it.
Reflect on your own professional practice	Self-reflection involves stepping back from a particular situation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• make sense of the situation• understand what the situation means• learn from the situation• apply what you have learnt to future situations. Self-reflection helps you understand your work practice and what you could do differently.
Demonstrate attempts to improve your own professional practice	Pursue formal and informal professional development opportunities. Apply what you learn to your practice and take up opportunities to coach and mentor other workers.



Demonstrate effective communication in the workplace

Use active listening skills and verbal encouragement to show you are listening to people and ask questions to clarify information.

Build rapport with others by showing empathy, interest and understanding.

Impact of own attitudes on client groups

We all have biases that impact how we view, communicate and respond to the people and situations around us. These biases might be based on racist, sexist or homophobic stereotypes or assumptions and some biases are unconscious; that is, we do not even realise we have them.

These biases can impact how we work with clients. For example, racist and homophobic stereotypes can cause us to make assumptions about clients' motivations and capabilities. Sexist views can cause us to overlook valuable viewpoints and perspectives.

Specific examples of how stereotypes might impact how we work with clients:

- 'Tom has been in prison, so I should be cautious around him.'
- 'Ronit is American, so she will probably be obnoxious. I will make sure I stand my ground if she challenges me.'
- 'Neil is Muslim, so he is probably pretty conservative. I will be careful about what I say.'
- 'Sam came to Australia as a refugee, so he probably grew up in poverty and has low expectations about what our service can provide.'
- 'Flossy has a disability, so she probably does not have many friends. I will focus on issues such as belonging and acceptance when I am working with her.'

By demonstrating an awareness of your own values, knowledge and attitudes and how they impact other people, you are modelling good practice. Demonstrating respectful curiosity and a willingness to learn from others who have different values and beliefs provides workers with a model for working on acknowledging and challenging their own biases.

Example

Regularly promote, model and demonstrate good practice and discuss issues with workers

Madeline works as a team leader at a small not-for-profit financial counselling service. The cohort of clients who use the service come from diverse backgrounds.

Madeline makes a conscious effort to acknowledge her own biases and how those biases might impact how she interacts with clients. During meetings with her team, Madeline talks about the steps she takes to reflect on her biases as a way of helping her own team develop this skill.

Madeline demonstrates an open-minded and curious attitude towards different beliefs and values as a way of promoting culturally safe practices within her team.

Discuss issues with workers as part of continuous improvement processes

Workers can provide valuable insights into what is and is not working in a health or community services organisation. They can also play a key role in trialling solutions to problems.

It is important to have regular discussions about workplace issues with workers as part of the continuous improvement process. Being open and willing to listen will help to create a culture of continuous improvement where workers trust you and feel confident about identifying and discussing workplace problems.

Ongoing discussions can take place as part of regular team meetings or as informal discussions. Video conferencing technology can be used to have discussions with workers who are working remotely and/or at multiple sites.

The methods you rely on to discuss issues with workers should reflect their needs and preferences. Additionally, the tone and approach that you adopt during these discussions is likely to play a significant role in how much you get out of them. In general, people respond more positively to a casual, relaxed way of conversing than to a formal, impersonal approach.

Workers will be more enthusiastic and motivated about continuous improvement if they feel they have a meaningful role in the process. Making changes to continuous improvement strategies based on your discussions with workers not only ensures



that the strategies continue to work and evolve, but also that workers continue to engage in the process.

Practice Task 16

Question 1

Which of the following actions demonstrate good practice to workers? Tick all that apply.

- Work collaboratively with others and share expertise
- Demonstrate inclusive and effective communication in the workplace
- Respond defensively to feedback
- Reflect on your own biases and professional practice
- Demonstrate attempts to improve your own professional practice

Question 2

Outline how stereotypes about specific groups of people can impact upon service delivery.

Question 3

Explain how incorporating changes into strategies for continuous improvement can help to maintain workers' engagement in continuous improvement processes.



Summary

- Service standards work best when they balance organisational objectives, requirements and stakeholder expectations.
- Individuals have different communication needs depending on factors such as the language they speak, cultural background, age and abilities.
- When communicating standards and practice, important stakeholders in the process include workers, clients, families and carers, volunteers and funding bodies.
- Quality assurance processes in health services are often quite different to quality assurance processes in community services.
- We all have biases that influence how we view, communicate and respond to people and situations around us, and these can impact how we work with clients.
- By demonstrating an awareness of their own values, knowledge and attitudes and how they affect other people, leaders in the workplace are modelling good practice.
- Leaders in the workplace being open and willing to listen to workers will help to create a culture of continuous improvement where workers trust people in leadership positions and feel confident about identifying and discussing workplace problems.



Learning Checkpoint 4

Ensure the continuous improvement of service standards

Part A

1. Which of the following may be incorporated into an organisation's revised service standards? Tick all that apply.

- Toolkits
- Relevant frameworks
- Client and family expectations
- Continuous improvement register
- Websites of relevant organisations

2. List three written methods of communication an organisation can use to communicate service standards and good practice to stakeholders.

3. Explain how self-reflection and self-assessment tools can be used as a way of checking that appropriate practice is being carried out by workers.



4. Which of the following will be covered under quality assurance processes common to health and community services organisations? Tick all that apply.

- Infection control
- Workplace bullying
- Workplace harassment
- Workplace governance
- Medication safety

Part B

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

Case study

Sharon works as a team leader in an organisation that provides services and supports to adults with substance misuse disorders.

Like all the team leaders at her organisation, Sharon plays a leadership role when it comes to ensuring the continuous improvement of service standards.

1. One of Sharon's team asks her for tips on how to communicate service standards to the families and carers of clients. List two tips that Sharon could provide to this team member.



- 2.** Sharon wants to demonstrate good practice to the members of her team. Identify two ways she can do this through the way she communicates with others in the workplace.

- 3.** Sharon wants to provide her team with a model for acknowledging and challenging their own biases. Suggest how she could do this.

- 4.** Sharon regularly discusses issues with workers about the organisation's strategies for continuous improvement.

Identify the tone and approach Sharon should adopt to generate a positive response from her team.



Glossary

Accessibility

Ensuring that services are delivered in a way that gives everyone the same opportunity to use those services.

Advocate

An individual who speaks up for a person to defend their rights.

Barrier/s

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

Benchmarking

A process that involves measuring an organisation's methods, procedures and/or performance against an appropriate comparison.

Best practice

Using the best skills and ideas available at the time to do a task.

Communication

Verbal or written exchange of information, news or ideas.

Complaint

Communicating something you believe is wrong and asking for it to be fixed.

Confidentiality

The principle of keeping personal information private, unless the person consents to sharing the information with other parties.

Continuous improvement

An iterative process that involves an ongoing cycle of identification, planning, implementation and review.

Continuous improvement plan

A plan that outlines the ongoing efforts by an organisation to improve processes and service delivery.

Continuous improvement register

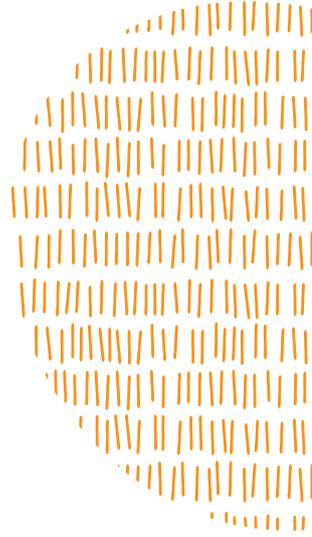
A tool used to document continuous improvement activities and their outcomes in a central location.

Disclosure

The act of sharing or releasing private or personal information.

Discrimination

The act of excluding or treating a person differently based solely on an attribute such as disability, age, gender, race or sexual orientation.



Dynamic social environment

Characterised by constant activity, change or progress.

Equity

When everyone is treated fairly, according to their needs.

Feedback

Information on a person’s performance or task, that can form the basis for improvement.

Feedback mechanism

A tool used to seek out and respond to the opinions, concerns, ideas and suggestions of service users and other relevant parties.

Good practice

Positive or desirable practice which is better than average and serves the purpose for which it is intended.

Holistic

Concerned with the whole body and mind as one system.

Indicator

Something that indicates the state or level of something; a gauge or measure.

Informed consent

A person’s decision to agree to a healthcare treatment, having been informed about the intervention and any alternative options.

Knowledge translation

The process of gathering, summarising and disseminating information that is easy for audiences to comprehend.

Monitoring

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

Ombudsman

An official who is appointed to investigate an individuals’ complaint against an organisation.

Operational plan

A detailed description of the key activities and goals an organisation will be undertaking during a specific period, including who does what and when and how they do it.

Organisational vision

The long-term change the organisation aspires to.

Outcome measurement tools

Instruments that can be used to evaluate the impacts of services on clients.

Person-centred approach

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

**Plain English**

Language that is clear, short and easy to understand.

Policy

A course of action proposed by an organisation as a basis for making decisions.

Privacy

A fundamental human right designed to protect people from intrusion and to selectively express themselves.

Proactive approach

Involves initiating action in preparation for a future threat.

Procedure

An established or official way of doing something.

Quality improvement plan

A specific and detailed work plan that is developed to improve the performance or outcomes of a service.

Reactive approach

Involves responding to a threat only when it has become a serious problem.

Rights-based approach

Situates the rights of service users at the centre of service provision, with a focus on accessibility, autonomy and equity.

Service delivery objectives

The targets or goals your organisation intends to achieve.

Social justice

The equal distribution of wealth, opportunity and privilege within a society, including equal access to community resources and opportunities.

Stakeholders

Anyone who has a 'stake' or interest in a case management plan, service or intervention.

Validated outcome measurement tools

Outcome measurement tools that have been tested for validity and reliability.

Webinar

A seminar, workshop or presentation that is hosted online via video conferencing software.

Written Easy English

A way of writing that can help people with cognitive disabilities access and understand written language.

