BSBTWK502
Manage team effectiveness

Learner Guide

Updated to include
National Quality
Framework changes

Aspire
Learning Resources

BSBTWK502

Manage team effectiveness

Release 1

Learner Guide

Aspire Version 2.1

Aspire
Learning Resources

Aspire Learning Resources
Supporting Vocational Education and Training for 30 years
1991 to 2023

Contents

Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *BSBTWK502 Manage team effectiveness*, Release 1.

Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. Information regarding how this Learner Guide relates to this unit of competency is detailed in our mapping guide.

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.
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.

This table maps each topic in this Learner Guide to the National Quality Standard and national learning framework: Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

T = Topic

Topics	National Quality Standard (NQS)
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
T2–T4	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
	Early Years Learning Framework
	Principles
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
	Partnerships
	Respect for diversity
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives
	Equity, inclusion and high expectations
	Sustainability
T1–T4	Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning
	Collaborative leadership and teamwork
	Practice
	Holistic, integrated and interconnected approaches
	Responsiveness to children
	Play-based learning and intentionality
T1–T4	Learning environments
	Cultural responsiveness
	Continuity of learning and transitions
	Assessment and evaluation for learning, development and wellbeing
	Learning Outcomes
	1. Children have a strong sense of identity
	2. Children are connected to and contribute to their world
T1–T3	3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
T1–T3	4. Children are confident and involved learners
	5. Children are effective communicators

Establish a team performance plan

Managing a team means working with each team member to bring out their best.

Each team member needs to be accountable for their performance but supported so they can perform effectively to meet their individual and team responsibilities.

A team performance plan should be developed in consultation with the team and outline how the manager will supervise and support the team to meet their expected outcomes and goals.

1A Identify the team's purpose, roles and responsibilities

A leader must align the focus of the team to enable them to achieve goals.

A leader in an early childhood education and care sector may have a variety of different job titles. They may be a Director, a board member, a coordinator or business owner. This position may require them to hold a licence to operate a service, be responsible for the day-to-day running of the operations (including the educators who run the programs) and be responsible to regulatory bodies. A team leader is usually responsible for staff who work with a particular group of children, such as the toddlers or babies.

The National Quality Standard (NQS) outlines the quality areas for expected best practice in the education and care services environment. The following table outlines the relevant quality area related to team leadership.

Quality area and descriptor	7: Governance and leadership	
Standard and descriptor	7.2 Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community.	
Element/ Concept	**Leadership** 7.2.1 Continuous improvement	There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place.
	7.2.2 Educational leadership	The educational leader is supported and leads the development and implementation of the educational program and assessment and planning cycle.
	7.2.3 Development of professionals	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members' performance is regularly evaluated and individual plans are in place to support learning and development.

The approved learning framework you will work with in early childhood is *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia* (EYLF). The framework is based on a system of goals and objectives, with core principles and practices. One of the principles is titled, 'Collaborative leadership and teamwork'. This means that:

➤ educators exercise leadership in the daily work with children, families and colleagues

➤ there is a positive work culture of cooperation and collaboration where the team:

 – share responsibility and professional accountability for children's learning, development and wellbeing

 – use their professional knowledge and skills in a way that assist everyone to do the best they can

 – share ideas and views on ways to improve practice through mentoring and shared learning.

Focus on goals

All leaders have a common purpose, with a clear understanding of the roles, responsibilities and individual goals of their team. This enables quality outcomes for children and the families who interact with the service. In this case, 'quality' refers to more than just a positive outcome in relation to the prescribed goals of the organisation but the cohesion of staff to fulfil these goals.

A leader must align the focus of the team so they can achieve goals. This includes facilitating a shared understanding of:

➤ the purpose of the organisation, knowing about the families and understanding their children (customers), and the team's role in relation to providing education and support to children.
➤ the organisation's goals and objectives, and how the team will help achieve them.

Identify the team's purpose

To shape the team in a positive and constructive way, there must be a clear focus or purpose.

A team is defined as a group of people with complementary skills that come together to complete a task and share a common commitment or purpose. A team can be a small group of staff, or it may include a number of people, including a range of other stakeholders. A stakeholder is anyone who will be affected by the team's work or has a degree of influence on the way the service operates. These may be family members, volunteers, experts, industry representatives or other people who provide services to the organisation and can influence the team's purpose. Team members will be more engaged when they understand the why behind the what; that is, why does the team exist?

It is important to ensure that your team's purpose is connected to the organisation's mission, values and strategies. When the team understands how their roles align with organisational goals, plans and objectives, they are more likely to work more effectively and creatively. The purpose of a team may be to deliver care and support to children in their role as educators – or they may have additional responsibilities requiring them to be part of working group or project team. The team may be required for many different projects. Here are a few examples:

➤ Prepare for an audit.
➤ Participate in the development or implementation of the service's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).
➤ Develop or update a policy.
➤ Identify staff learning and development needs.
➤ Investigate professional development or training needs.
➤ Promote diversity and different cultural perspectives amongst staff.
➤ Enhance interactions with the local community.

Review organisational plans

The team's purpose can be established by reviewing the organisation's vision, mission, strategic and operational plans, and identifying the team's role in fulfilling goals and objectives. Ask:

➤ What is the team here to do?

➤ How do its activities link with the organisation's plans, goals and objectives?

Vision

The purpose for the organisation – what it is striving for in the long term

Mission statement

The reason for the organisation's existence – what it believes it is currently achieving

Strategic plans

Strategic plans explain the long-term objectives and direction of the organisation for the next 3–5 year period.

Organisational plans

Organisational plans explain the budget, areas of focus and key objectives for the next 12 months (fiscal year).

Operational plans

Operational plans explain the day-to-day objectives, resources, budgets and short-term methods needed to achieve milestones written in organisational and strategic plans. Operational plans are usually team/department-specific, or may cover the whole of a small business.

Team objectives

A team needs to have very clear objectives and outcomes in order to be cohesive and productive.

When everyone in the team knows 'where we are going and why', and helps to set those objectives, there is greater potential for cooperation and high morale. Team objectives may be long-term (ongoing), for example, to maintain enrolment numbers ; or they may be short-term, for example, to develop better partnerships with families.

Team objectives and goals need to link to organisational goals and objectives if they are to achieve organisational vision and purpose.

Clearly defining team purpose, goals and objectives has the following importance.

Clear goals

Clarity helps ensure that all team members have a clear definition of the team's purpose and goals. Once this is established it must be distributed to all team members and other interested members of management.

Keeping track

It is important to keep track of team goals and make sure that all members are contributing to them effectively. Some people, both from within the team and out, may see the team as a medium for completing personal goals or agendas. This is acceptable if it is part of the team's original purpose, but if it is not, the team could be derailed, rendering it ineffective.

Clear alignment of team purpose with organisational goals

By clearly defining the organisation's plans and objectives, there is an obvious relationship between team purpose and its overall goals and objectives.

SMART objectives

Goals are desired results that are broad and long-term.

Objectives are specific and need to be written to a set formula to ensure they hit the mark in achieving what is needed.

To be clear and unambiguous, objectives need to be written according to the 'SMART' principles and be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-framed. For example: 'by 2022, 50% of team leaders working in the 4-year-old room will hold a Diploma level qualification.' The objective must be realistic and achievable; for example, this objective assumes that there is enough time proposed to complete their study, and there is the budget to support tuition fees or back fill to cover rosters as required.

Specific	All objectives must be specific and not general. A specific objective will generally answer the four W's:
	➤ What needs to be achieved?
	➤ Why does this need to be achieved?
	➤ Who will be involved?
	➤ Where it will take place?
	Specific objectives need to be clear and free from ambiguity, especially if they are given to team members.
Measurable	Objectives need to have quantitative data or something tangible in order to measure progress and indicate when the objective has been met. Measuring progress keeps the team on track. A measurable objective will be able to answer:
	➤ How much?
	➤ How many?
	➤ How will we know when the goal is reached?
Achievable	Objectives need to be achievable. They need to stretch and challenge team members but still be attainable and within reach.
Relevant	Objectives need to be relevant to the outcome or purpose of the team as well as the vision, mission and strategies of the organisation. A relevant objective will answer:
	➤ Is this worthwhile?
	➤ Does this match our needs?
	➤ Does it support our organisation's plans and goals?

| Time-bound | All objectives must time-bound to a date when the objective should be met. Time frames motivate work teams by giving them something to aim for. A deadline gives people an incentive to commit to an objective in an environment where the business of day-to-day work can dominate. |

Identify team roles and responsibilities

With an understanding of the purpose, the leader can identify the specific tasks and roles and responsibilities of team members.

Just like a sporting team, every member of a team in an organisation plays a key role and has important responsibilities. Leaders must consider all of the tasks involved for the team to achieve its purpose. They must align the tasks according to the skills, knowledge and experience of each team member in accordance with their position descriptions.

A position description is a broad, general and written statement of a specific job/position. These are essential in planning and communicating team roles and responsibilities and ensuring a team understands their expectations.

Position descriptions will usually include the following information about roles and responsibilities but there can be quite a variety in the layout and level of detail required.

Type of position	Explanation as to whether the job is based on a salary or an hourly rate, and whether the position is permanent or not. For example: full time, casual, part time and the ratio (i.e. 0.6 days per week).
Job title	The formal job title reflects the actual job being undertaken. For example: Educator, Senior Educator, Team leader etc
Experience and qualifications	The level of experience such as recently completed study or experienced educator. A list of required qualifications such as: > Certificate III Early Childhood Education and Care. > Current First Aid Certificate, Anaphylaxis and Asthma Management training. > Clear Working with Children Check. > Approved child protection qualification (desirable).
Summary of position/position purpose	A brief overview of what the job actually entails including a summary of the key duties and major functions. For example: an outline of the main philosophy of the service and how the role aligns with those values.
Key relationships	Relationships with internal and external stakeholders that impact the position. This can include reporting lines, such as a supervisor or team leader.

Key duties/key responsibilities	Greater detail on each of the duties and functions undertaken in the role.
	Key responsibilities can be separated out into the NQF areas, such as educational program and practice, children's' health and safety, staffing arrangements, etc.
	This should identify the key duties. For example, a person may be employed as an educator, but they have other responsibilities to maintain policies, liaise with community groups, arrange incursions, etc.
Skills/capabilities	Required skills that an individual must have in order to undertake the duties required by the position. For example: communication capabilities include effective listening skills; seeks, provides and shares practical information in an appropriate and respectful manner.
Key results areas (KRAs) or Key performance measures (KPIs)	Key areas of responsibility that the person in the job must hold. For example: communication KPIs include evidence of positive relationships with all stakeholders and demonstrate strong interpersonal skills when interacting with colleagues, children and families.

Consult with the team to clarify roles and responsibilities

Consultation is the process of sharing information and considering the views of key people when making an informed decision.

Each member of a team brings their own knowledge, skills and abilities that can add to team effectiveness. The group or team leader should identify and use these skills and abilities in a consultative way.

The leader will benefit by communicating and negotiating with team members about the team's purpose, objectives, roles and responsibilities.

The benefits of a consultative team culture can include the benefit of additional insights and ideas, improved satisfaction levels, and improved interest in and commitment to the job. When team members know their opinions are valued, they understand that they are playing an important role in the context of the team and the organisation.

Stakeholders can include a diverse group of people and organisations. Typically, the stakeholders of an education and care service include:

> staff
> families who use or might use your service
> professionals who support your service and its clients
> specialists who are part of your support network
> community members such as service groups, suppliers, elders
> government bodies that monitor compliance or provide support.

Consultation methods

Central to effective planning is the need for team-level consultation.

Consultation with team members during the planning process provides you with critical information to help you plan the team's purpose, objectives, roles and responsibilities.

Mechanisms, such as scheduled weekly meetings, phone calls, a shared computer network and platforms using chat, video conferencing and email can be used to share information; you may also utilise social media applications to communicate.

The process of consultation can be achieved through the methods detailed below.

Ways of consulting with others and getting feedback in the workplace	
Meetings	Formal, scheduled meetings and informal, ad hoc gatherings between team members contribute to a better understanding of tasks, responsibilities and roles.
Interviews	Creating a list of questions to establish knowledge, skills and understanding of the task can help you identify individual needs and attributes.
Brainstorming sessions	The group considers a number of possible perspectives. Successful brainstorming requires commitment, contribution and cooperation by all team members. This might occur on a planning or strategy day.
Email and/ or intranet communication	If a team is spread across different locations, such as interstate or regional and city centres, electronic communication can allow for contributions from all team members.

Mutual accountability

Mutual accountability occurs when members of the team see themselves as interdependent; that is, the success or failure of one member of the team has implications for the whole team.

All members of a team must feel a sense of personal accountability for the outcome of the team's efforts.

For employed or contracted staff, accountabilities may include responsibilities as defined in position descriptions, codes of conduct or behaviour, duty statements, and statements of conduct outlining responsibilities, actions and performance expectations. These documents include measurable performance indicators that allow the team leader and the member to monitor and adjust performance to meet the agreed expectations.

Agreement should be reached through consultation and formalised in a signed document so they are accountable. Accountability occurs when the team member accepts the responsibility for achieving their performance requirements, and willingly adjusts their performance when required to meet expectations.

✏ Practice Task 1

1. Describe the method you would use to establish a clear team purpose, and well-defined roles and responsibilities.

2. Draw a line to match each organisational plan and objective to its correct definition.

    *   Operational plans

    *   Strategic plans

    *   Vision

    *   Mission

    *   The purpose for the organisation

    *   The reason for the organisation's existence

    *   The long-term objectives and direction of the organisation for the next 3–5 year period

    *   The day-to-day objectives, resources, budgets and short-term methods needed to achieve milestones written into organisational and strategic plans

3. Provide one example of how you can consult others to develop a shared understanding of a team's purpose, roles and responsibilities.

1B Develop team performance plans

Once the team's purpose, roles and objectives are set, a performance plan can be developed.

A performance plan is a method of documenting an agreement between the team member, the team leader and the rest of the team that stipulates the scope of their involvement in the project. Performance plans may refer to individual performance plans linked to team goals or team plans based on work assignments and responsibilities.

Team members who have clearly defined goals benefit when a robust plan is communicated to them outlining their specific responsibilities.

Performance planning is an ongoing process where expected outcomes, outputs, goals and objectives are established for the work team and key performance indicators (KPIs) are measured to gauge progress and improvement.

Create a team performance plan

A team performance plan sets out the goals and actions for team performance over a specified term. It must be consistent with the operational plan.

The creation of the team performance plan should be in accordance with prescribed organisational guidelines and legal requirements. Team performance plans extrapolate operational plans into individual personnel and team-level requirements. They are the day-to-day actions and objectives that must be achieved by team members to ensure team and organisational goals are met.

The main benefit of undertaking this detailed level of planning is to subdivide what began as a large mass of organisational or operational work into a set of clearly defined and manageable units. By allocating work in this way, you will ensure that the work of both individuals and groups are focused on the achievement of the organisation's strategic goals.

There is no prescribed format for the creation of a team performance plan; however, there are several elements that should be considered in order to develop a clear and comprehensive plan for teams and individuals. This needs to list team members and managers as well as their positions and job titles.

Organisational and team goals

Broad statements that outline team goals and organisational level goals.

Key responsibilities

The areas of responsibility for team members, team leaders and managers in relation to the performance plan.

Performance monitoring

The level of performance that explains what is needed from an individual/team to meet their requirements/outcomes. This includes a set of realistic and tangible KPIs for each action; it must also include a time frame for it to be achieved.

Actions

Activities that need to be carried out to bring about the desired objectives and performance standards. This also requires allocating a person/s to each action.

Monitoring and evaluation

Provides feedback on improvements to operations and efficiencies, while also listing additional required resources.

Review

This records any performance issues that need to be addressed and a timeline for progress reports.

Sign-off/approval

Undertaken when the project has been completed or when the end of the performance period has ended.

Incorporate input from stakeholders

Work with a range of stakeholders to develop plans for team performance.

It may seem counter-intuitive to negotiate key performance measures with other team members or managers, but this process has several benefits. Negotiation can highlight potential issues that may impact performance as well as the strengths and weaknesses of individual staff or the team as a whole. As a manager, you can allocate the right work to the right team member based on the outcomes of this process.

The benefits of working together to develop KPIs include team members having an increased level of personal commitment and managers having a better level of understanding of team members' perspectives. This allows for feedback and critical analysis of the role and the performance measures applied to it.

Strategies to foster team input will be further discussed in Topic 2.

The following steps provide a guideline for developing an effective performance plan using input and agreement with your team.

Developing a performance plan	
Define expectations	Provide and clearly explain the list of expectations regarding following policies and procedures, such as when representing the service in the community, using social media, etc. Gather feedback and gain agreement on these expectations before moving on to the next step.

Developing a performance plan	
Determine milestones	Break down the performance goals into smaller milestones to assist you in monitoring progress toward the end goal. You don't want a surprise when it's time to evaluate a person's overall performance, so build in checkpoints to stay on top of performance before it gets too far off track.
Agree on terms	In a consultative process, create an agreed set of terms that outline the specific performance of each team member. It is generally established that performance improves when the terms are mutually agreed.
Ensure regular accountability	Accountability requires some form of benchmark. As a team leader, schedule regular meeting times to keep your team members accountable. Use the time to review goals, discuss issues or difficulties and make adjustments as necessary. Regular milestone meetings also improve your contact with the team and the project, which allows for better leadership.
Document required outcomes, results and consequences	An effective performance agreement requires clear documentation of the requirements of the individual, the benefits to the organisation by achieving these requirements, and the results and/or consequences of not achieving these results. This may include the disadvantage to the service as a result of loss of income or rewards for outstanding performance.
Reach agreement	Ensure that you and your team members sign and date the performance plan. Once the plan is established, you can refer to the agreement as the benchmark for monitoring and controlling performance throughout the project.

Key performance measures

The team performance plan indicate measures in relation to the quantitative elements of job performance.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) are essential elements of a team performance plan. These elements are based on the function of the role and must be discussed and confirmed with the staff member before they commence their job, and thereafter at every performance appraisal.

A practical action plan will help you achieve your team's key performance indicators.

The number of performance measures depends on the technical complexity of the role, the professional expectations within the given industry, organisational culture and the personal requirements of the line manager/Director. In all cases, the measures should directly apply to the job requirements as outlined in the work plan and their position description.

For example, KPIs may relate to any goals and responsibilities to implement the service's Quality improvement Plan (QIP). KPI measures might be evidence of arrangements for participation in personal development for staff or evidence of participation in a program.

Other examples of KPI's might be related to competency skills, knowledge and document or responsiveness, such as:

> evidence of observations and assisting with planning and programming age appropriate activities and learning experiences.
> evidence of regular and effective communications with staff.
> behaves in alignment with and promotes program specific values and objectives.
> evidence of attendance at regular staff and team meetings.
> can demonstrate customer relationships with an increase in parent satisfaction and positive outcomes for families.
> examples of structured feedback on performance.
> evidence of leadership and teamwork such as initiative and motivation

Quantitative performance measures

Quantitative performance metrics involve an evidence-based method of collection and analysis of work-related data.

Workplace data can be generated automatically from existing information systems and extracted from observations and reporting systems. A combination of the two sources provides the most holistic measurement of performance.

Quantitative performance can be thought of as 'how much' a person does in their job. Here are some examples of some quantitative performance measures.

Quantitative performance measures
Number of children in each room or number of hours face-to-face with children
Number of organisational policies and procedural documents reviewed or developed
Number of meetings arranged with families or external stakeholders
Percentage of responses returned on surveys or questionnaires, attendance at information sessions, etc.

Qualitative performance measures

Qualitative usually refers to how well the job is completed, in particular the aspects that determine the quality standards of a task.

A typical set of criteria for qualitative performance assessment might include: knowledge, desire to learn, initiative, reliability, teamwork and attitude. These should be discussed with each staff member when their work plan is developed so they understand the organisation's expectations of them; for example, in the way they perform their job role and behave in the workplace.

Effective leaders provide ongoing qualitative feedback so that any problems are corrected as soon as they are observed, rather than waiting for a formal performance appraisal. It is important that this type of measurement is consistent, reliable and effective.

Qualitative measures can be assessed on a scale for ongoing performance monitoring, as shown in the table below.

Performance measures	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Excellent	Superior
Knowledge	Knows very little about job	Has good working knowledge of job	Has detailed knowledge of job	Is a recognised expert
Desire to learn	Shows no desire to learn	Is willing to learn more	Wants to learn more	Has a strong desire to learn more
Initiative	Shows no initiative	Shows some initiative	Shows considerable initiative (self-starter)	Shows extraordinary initiative
Reliability	Is completely unreliable	Is generally reliable but needs supervision at times	Is very reliable	Is always reliable
Attitude	Negative	Positive	Shows enthusiasm	Creates excitement

Develop performance standards

A key part in creating a work plan is the development of clear performance standards and indicators.

Performance standards must set out the required level of performance that explains, in non-quantifiable terms, what is needed from an individual or group to support business objectives. A performance standard should be based on key results areas (KRAs), or key elements of the operational plan.

When deciding what the performance standards will be for a particular task, you should always determine which actions will be a minimum standard of acceptable performance for the task. Consult with key personnel and consider what has been achieved in the past, to ensure your standards are reasonable and achievable. Take the time to gather the data in order to make an informed decision about what measures to set for your team.

In most cases, you should set your performance standards based the following three steps.

1

Identify the Key Results Areas (KRAs)

Key Results Areas are the areas of responsibility for team members. They are usually described in the person's job description or your performance standards. If KRAs are not pre-determined, you will need to analyse the job roles of your team members to identify what areas of the business they are responsible for.

The KRAs will change significantly depending on the nature of work operations and job roles of your team.

They may be based on achievement of:

> Interactions with children
> Safety
> Team participation
> Innovation
> Quality
> Learning and development
> Leadership

2

Confirm the performance standard

Based on each KRA, confirm the standards of performance that need to be achieved. Given that 'what you measure is what you get', it is critical that the KPIs support the outcomes you want to achieve. (If you get these wrong, everything that follows will be out of alignment.)

3

Determine how you will measure performance standards and achievement of KRAs

After establishing the KRAs and performance standards in the previous steps, you will now focus on how to measure a team member's outputs, to determine whether the standard and area of responsibility is being fulfilled. This is known as their Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

The most effective way of determining individual KPIs is to review your performance standards and break them down into team and individual measures.

KPIs should:

> reflect and feed into the organisation's goals.
> be quantifiable where possible – for example, they should be explained in financial terms, numbers, raw data, percentages, rates etc.
> be fair and achievable under regular operating conditions.
> be clear, concise and simple.

Example
KRAs and KPIS

Barry works in a large organisation with over 12 early learning centres across Australia. He has just finished drafting the work plan for his team for the next four weeks. The KRAs and KPIs that Barry has set are described in the table below. They relate to the implementation of a sustainability policy for the service.

Key Result Area	Performance standards	Key Performance Indicator
Resource use	➤ Minimise resource use, such as paper, electricity, gas and water. ➤ Increase efficiency of the resources used by the service, such as energy, water and appliances.	➤ 50% reduction in energy bills and new paper purchases. ➤ Reduction in water bills by 50%. ➤ Water tank water to be used for garden.
Chemical use	➤ Reduce the use of toxic materials in equipment, furniture and cleaning products.	Alterations to purchasing policy to require purchase of only environmentally safe products for cleaning and other purchases.
Life cycle of products	➤ Employ lifecycle management approaches, such as examining the entire lifecycle of a product (from production and distribution to consumption and disposal).	Alterations to purchasing policy to include requirement for investigation into lifecycle of products.
Recycling	➤ Implement procedures for recycling and family donations, such as reusable boxes, paper and containers.	Less than 10% of rubbish going into land fill (rubbish bin).
Monitoring effectiveness	➤ Undertake a review process for continuous improvement.	75% high or very high satisfaction levels about sustainability initiatives from family surveys.

✏ Practice Task 2

1. Which of the following are examples of quantitative performance measures? Tick all that apply.

☐ Number of enrolments

☐ Fees collected from families

☐ Staff feedback survey

☐ Number of staff involved in professional development activities

☐ Management's opinion

2. What three steps should you follow when setting worker or team performance standards?

3. Write at least five questions you could use as a checklist for developing an effective performance plan.

1C Support team to meet expected outcomes

To succeed as a team leader, you have to believe in your team members and the purpose of the team.

Your team members will often look to you for support and direction. You should monitor individual and team progress and approach methods of support on an individual case-by-case basis. You should also consider utilising the skills and knowledge of the team in dealing with some of the issues that arise. You do not need to be an expert on all matters, but you are expected to monitor progress and facilitate the process of finding solutions to problems.

Here are some of the support strategies you can use to ensure the best outcomes are achieved from your team.

An awareness of the challenges your colleagues face will help you develop solutions to support them through hardship.

Keep the purpose, goals and approach sharp and fresh

Team leaders need to keep the team's purpose, objectives and approach clear and fresh in the team's mind. Regular team meetings to discuss progress and generate new ideas for goal accomplishment will greatly assist in this regard.

Build commitment and confidence

Team leaders should encourage both individual and mutual accountability amongst team members. Providing constant, relevant and meaningful feedback to team members on their individual and group performance helps to achieve this.

Strengthen the mix and level of skills within the team

Effective team leaders are committed to ensuring the team acquires the skills necessary to achieve its objectives, while simultaneously encouraging team members to take on challenging, interesting and varied work.

Manage relationships with the rest of the organisation

Team leaders require strong communication skills in order to manage the team's relationship with the rest of the organisation. The team leader must ensure that key stakeholders are aware of the team's purpose, goals and plans so that they understand the limitations placed on team members and identify opportunities to contribute or become involved.

Remove obstacles to performance

Team leaders will be required to remove barriers that impact the team's performance. This often involves negotiating better terms with management for increased funding or access to resources. It may involve removing a team member who is stifling the progress of the team.

Do 'real work'

Team leaders should lead from the front. They should do roughly the same amount of 'real' work as other team members. The role of team leader should not be used to just make decisions. Rather, the team leader should volunteer for work that is high-risk or difficult.

Take responsibility for team guidance, monitoring and control

Team leaders must take responsibility for the team's guidance, monitoring and control. Teams often lose sight of the bigger picture, and the team leader needs to demonstrate their willingness to control and guide the team as it works towards its goals. It is the team leader's responsibility to ensure measures and milestones are in place, and to produce reports required by the team and the rest of the organisation.

Coaching support

Coaching is a learning process that aims to bring out the best in a person.

Coaching is one of the most effective ways of developing the competencies of staff. It can be used to support effective team performance and is cost-effective, uses in-house expertise and provides instant feedback on progress.

This method uses a two-way process that involves observing their performance, giving them opportunities to reflect on and develop their skills and offering advice on how they can improve their skills.

Encourage	➤ Developing a proactive, high-performance team is best achieved by setting high (but achievable) goals and providing encouragement, rather than by pointing out poor performance and chastising those responsible.
	➤ If poor performance becomes an issue with one of your team members, consider handling it in a constructive manner, and in a private setting. Challenge your team member to rise to a set of new goals that are challenging and motivating and work out a plan together of how to achieve those goals.
Acknowledge achievements	➤ When a member of your team demonstrates exemplary behaviour, acknowledge them individually and in front of the team. Allow team members the opportunity to acknowledge their teammates' positive contributions. When you help people feel good about themselves, improved performance will follow.

| **Bond your team** | ➤ Positive coaching requires that you build the team's unity – the sense of oneness that fosters accountability, cooperation and support, while simultaneously reducing competition, angst and backstabbing. By encouraging team members to work together, you make every task a team-building exercise that has positive results for each participant as well as the project as a whole. |
| | ➤ Consider activities that will help your team 'gel'. As your team members learn to trust each other, they will support each other to accomplish team goals. All team members should be encouraged and supported to have active input into planning, decision-making and operational aspects of the team activities. |

Supervision support

Regularly supervise each team member and make sure they are working effectively and meeting team objectives.

The level of support that you can offer your team members will vary, depending on their needs, preferences, performance and areas they are finding most challenging.

Providing supervisory support is key to ensuring team members are working safely and productively. It also enables directors/managers to gain a personal understanding of team members' skill gaps, through a process of direct observation.

Supervision involves:

➤ consistently observing the performance and outputs of team members

➤ measuring and testing outcomes during and after the completion of tasks

➤ attending a place of work and observing tasks completed or in progress

➤ removing obstacles to performance, such as a shortage of resources

➤ making yourself available to provide input into activities and correct issues as they occur

➤ monitoring the health and safety of workers and other people who are at the service

➤ providing relevant instructions to team members.

Provide education, training and development opportunities

To support the team performance plan, team need to develop new skills and knowledge and refine existing competencies.

Learning and development are part of the continuous improvement cycle and team members should be consulted about their needs on a regular basis so that relevant support is provided.

In early childhood education and care, regulations require that performance reviews are undertaken to identify and plan training, professional development,

seminars or networking opportunities for staff to develop and build on their expertise. Element 7.2.3 of the NQS states that a system of regular performance reviews alongside individual learning and development plans is essential.

Regular monitoring and reviewing of performance help leaders identify skill and knowledge gaps that may affect performance. You can then determine education, training and development requirements that enable individuals and teams to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. You should also be familiar with your organisation's business plan, in particular the organisation's goals and objectives, to see where new skills are needed; the QIP identifies gaps in a service provision, which allows a plan to be developed to achieve a goal.

An investment in your staff's development allows them to invest their new skills in an organisation.

In some situations, you may be required to determine staff needs for a specific task or project. In others, you will need to identify the various skills needed for the team to operate as an effective unit.

Formal and informal learning opportunities

To learn new skills, gain new knowledge or enhance existing skills and knowledge, people can undertake formal or informal education, training and development within their workplace or attend external courses, conferences or information sessions.

Professional education usually refers to formal, accredited programs such as degrees or certificate courses. Training is the way in which specific job skills and knowledge are taught and ranges from formal, structured courses to coaching, mentoring and informal discussions.

Sometimes, this may be informally, through daily interactions, modelling, listening and sharing.

Examples of ways to improve knowledge and skills include:
➤ extending current qualifications, such as undertaking your Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care when holding a Certificate III
➤ achieving a food-handling certificate
➤ training to increase your understanding of pedagogy, nutrition, planning strategies and/or teamwork.

Development is about redefining and extending existing skills and knowledge by ensuring the latest practices are followed, work practices are improved or opportunities are given for advancement.

Example

Use a systematic approach

Consider the following scenario:

You sit down with John to discuss his poor performance. Your conversation lasts for some time and involves discussing some workplace adjustments to help him maintain motivation. Before John leaves, you clearly outline your expectations for improvement in his performance. You both leave the meeting feeling positive, and John appears to understand what he needs to do. You feel confident that you will start to see some good results from John. A few weeks go by, and you haven't seen any improvement in John's performance. Nothing has changed, if anything, his performance has worsened. You're frustrated and wonder what you are doing wrong.

In this instance, you should have followed up the meeting by setting clear objectives to be achieved within a defined time frame. You may also have set some KPIs in order to track John's progress more effectively.

✎ Practice Task 3

1. List three strategies that could be used to support the performance of team members.

_____

_____

_____

2. How can coaching be used to help individuals achieve the operational goals? Select all that apply.

☐ To build capability in workers

☐ To punish behaviours seen by the supervisor as negatively affecting the business

☐ To improve areas of under-performance

☐ To provide feedback that is personal and emotive in nature

☐ To inspire and motivate

☐ To reinforce excellence in performance

3. List three ways in which you can provide formal and informal training to team members to ensure they meet the expected outcomes.

Summary

- Team effectiveness increases when the leader sets out clear goals and responsibilities for the team that support organisational strategic plans and objectives.
- The team purpose should be established to help people understand the 'why' behind the 'what'.
- One of the most effective ways of managing individual and team performance is by developing performance plans.
- Consult with team members and other stakeholders to set out the requirements for the team performance plan.
- The performance planning process starts with stating expectations, determining milestones, agreeing on terms, having regular accountability, establishing outcomes, results and consequences and then making sure the team member and team leader agree on the plan.
- Team leaders should ensure that team members progress towards their goals by establishing and following performance plans, and by providing opportunities for training, education and development, as well as 'positive coaching'.
- Once the performance objectives have been established, you need to establish measurable Key Results Areas (KRAs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- Leaders must support their team members to ensure they meet the expected outcomes by providing ongoing coaching, supervision and training.

Learning Checkpoint 1
Establish a team performance plan

Part A

1. List five items that should be included in a team performance plan.

....

....

....

....

....

2. Draw a line to match up each of the following terms about work performance plans to its correct description.

    * Team objectives

    * Team KPIs

    * Team purpose

    * Team roles and responsibilities

    * A statement that describes the reason that the team exists and what it needs to achieve at a higher level

    * The position requirements, including key tasks and duties that need to be performed by team members

    * Quantitative and qualitative performance measures that are used in the performance monitoring process

    * A clear and measurable outcome that sets a clear direction for the work team to be cohesive and productive

3. What is the difference between qualitative and quantitative performance measures? In your answer, provide examples for each.

4. List four training strategies you can use to support your work team to meet expected performance outcomes, including individual, task and team support. Identify areas in which you can improve, and then develop a plan to increase your effectiveness as a team leader.

Part B

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

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Case study

</div>

A childcare service has a strategic plan that includes statements about having an inclusive workplace. The owner is aware of a gender imbalance in the industry, with very few men being employed as childcare educators. The following information was discovered using quantitative data:

> Five out of six (83 per cent) leadership positions were held by a female.
> Only 12 per cent of employees were male.

The owner has asked a team of staff to investigate ways to attract more males to apply for positions as educators at the centre. The Director wants to see an increase of 30 per cent in the number of male educators by the beginning of 2023.

1. Write a clear purpose statement for the team.

2. When developing team KPIs for the team, what must the owner consider?

3. Set three objectives the owner might establish with her team as part of the performance plan.

4. How does effective consultation with her team members help the owner to develop the team's roles and responsibilities? Select all that apply.

    ☐ Contributes to a greater level of personal contribution from staff

    ☐ Provides the owner with an opportunity to show off her wealth of knowledge

    ☐ Encourages accountability in the workplace

    ☐ Allows for team members to develop their understanding of the team objectives

    ☐ Provides opportunities to gather information to assist in assigning work roles and responsibilities

    ☐ Allows the owner to report her success to the Board of Management

Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

2A Develop strategies to foster team member input

2B Develop or modify policies and procedures to promote accountability

2C Provide feedback to team members

2D Develop processes to identify and address issues

Develop and facilitate team cohesion

To get the full potential from each team member, take the time to develop a work environment where the contributions from the team are encouraged.

Developing a range of strategies that encourage participation in decision making and operational aspects of different tasks will help build accountability in team members and improve team cohesion.

2A Develop strategies to foster team member input

Consultation ensures individuals are given the opportunity to have input into issues relating to their role.

Consultation processes give team members the opportunity to contribute to issues related to their work role. These processes include planning, decision-making and other operational aspects such as resource usage and improvements to operations.

No two workplaces are the same, and the consultation processes that are appropriate for one service may not suit another. Processes used for communicating and consulting need to be relevant needs of your organisation.

There are many methods you can employ to encourage input from team members.

Team meetings	➤ Regular team meets can be used to discuss broad team issues as a group and provide a forum for staff to raise issues and provide updates on their work tasks.
	➤ Team meetings are an ideal platform for encouraging staff to make contributions and for you as a leader to reward and acknowledge consultative behaviours you are trying to develop in your team.
One-on-one discussions	➤ Ranging from formal discussions (such as performance appraisals) to informal, incidental discussions, one-on-one discussions are an important part of the consultation processes.
	➤ This approach can be particularly valuable with new or less confident staff who may not yet feel comfortable contributing their views in a more open forum.
Email / notices / written communication	➤ In some instances, consultation may require written communication. This includes instances where information needs to be recorded and maintained, such as an agreement between parties or an assurance something will be completed in a specified time.
Health and safety committees	➤ Consultation with staff on workplace health and safety is a legislative requirement.
	➤ Most workplaces have a health and safety committee and their meetings provide the opportunity for staff, or their nominated representative, to provide input into how safety can be promoted and protected in the workplace.
	➤ Written outcomes from these meetings, including details of how hazards and risks are to be managed, must be shared with all staff.

Consultative communication processes take advantage of what is often an under-used resource in an organisation: its people. Effective team leaders recognise when team members have meaningful contributions to share in the way of experience or skills that other team members, including the team leader, may not have. Effective leaders place as much value on receiving information as they do on conveying it. They need to be good listeners and encourage those around them to contribute to how their role is defined and performed.

The benefits of a consultative team culture are not just limited to the additional insights and ideas generated by a group of individuals working together. When you encourage your team to contribute to organisational decision-making, they are more likely to encounter greater job satisfaction and a heightened interest in and commitment to their job.

Encourage input relating to role

Team members can be part of the decisions regarding operational aspects of their role.

Issues relating to work role may include:

> Too much or not enough work
> Requests relating to work hours, rosters, leave, work arrangements, remote working etc.
> environmental factors such as office space, furniture, heating, noise levels
> Training needs such as knowledge and expert skills
> Workplace health and safety
> Work task performance; for example, different ways to teach a concept, update a policy, consult with families etc
> Resources required to do their work such as software programs of apps, communication tools, access to information for research etc

Staff are often best positioned to recognise issues and factors that affect their ability to perform their role. Leaders need to actively encourage their staff to put forward new ideas, provide comment, show initiative and raise any concerns about work-related issues. The nature of work-related issues vary.

Acknowledging contributions

Team members and individuals who provide input should be acknowledged for their contribution.

Staff contributions should always be respected, responded to and given due regard. Demonstrating that you value their experience and contributions reinforces and encourages future suggestions. You should foster an atmosphere that is comfortable and non-threatening; an atmosphere in which the team shares ideas, tips, work strategies and information.

Supporting team members to contribute

➤ Listening to and respecting their contribution and encouraging other staff to do likewise

➤ Including making proactive suggestions as a performance indicator for review when conducting performance appraisals

➤ Evaluating and exploring the feasibility of their suggestion/s

➤ Asking follow-up questions to demonstrate that you are interested in their views

➤ Publicly acknowledging their contribution; for example, in newsletters to families or at meetings etc

Planning and decision-making processes

An effective manager includes everyone in the planning and decision-making process to encourage fuller understanding of the group's goals, to increase engagement and to support new initiatives and changes.

There are many different models, techniques and approaches to group planning and decision-making. Each technique is valid and relies on different factors, which are outlined below.

Key factors impacting on planning and decision-making processes

➤ The type of decision that needs to be made

➤ The time and resources that are available

➤ The environment that the team wants to create,

➤ The nature of the task that is being worked on

➤ The size of the group or team

➤ The physical location of the group or team

Primarily, there are two ways to make decisions as teams: consensus or voting. These are explained below.

Consensus

Consensus occurs when a team decision is agreed to by all participants. Consensus results after the team expresses the problem and compromises are made. Consensus does not mean unanimous agreement. Everyone may not agree on every detail, but members do believe the decision to be a sound one that they are willing to support. The main benefits of consensus decision-making are that everyone involved is able to express their viewpoint and that the decision will most likely be the best one. In addition, because the decision was arrived at by consensus, its implementation is more likely to be supported by the entire team.

The challenge of consensus decision-making is that it takes time. Being pressured to reach a consensus means some people may be tempted to forego their true opinions for the sake of time, thereby compromising the group arriving at an optimum solution.

Voting

Voting adopts the classic democratic approach in which the majority rules. The main benefit of voting is that it is quick and decisive. The challenge of using voting is that it creates 'winners' and 'losers'. The 'losers' of the vote may not support the implementation of the decision and may even resort to adopting a 'sabotage' mentality to prove that the decision was wrong. When a team chooses a voting decision-making method, the team must be clear as to how many votes becomes a majority; for example, is the definition of 'majority': half, two-thirds or three-quarters of the team?

Strategies for gaining consensus

A consensus decision results from full input of all team members.

Everyone in the group must be given a chance to be heard and must feel comfortable speaking. True consensus is achieved by teams working together to arrive at decisions that everyone believes are feasible. Ensure that you identify all key stakeholders and invite them to participate.

Here are some strategies for consensus planning and decision-making.

Strategies for reaching consensus	
Clarify the issue	Share relevant information and make sure that everyone fully understands the issue or problem.
Explore the issue and discuss alternative solutions	➤ Gather initial ideas and reactions; identify all the issues and explore all stakeholders' understandings. ➤ Collect alternative solutions and discuss the pros and cons of each. ➤ Narrow down the alternatives: eliminate some, short-list others.
Look for developing ideas and common agreements	Try to identify proposals that consolidate the best elements of the ideas presented and look for a solution that satisfies stakeholders' main concerns.
Clarify and amend the chosen proposal	Ensure that all remaining concerns are voiced and considered. Look for possible amendments that make the idea more acceptable.
Check for and reach agreement on the outcome	Ask if anyone disagrees. During the final stages it may be difficult to get everyone to agree. Explain that consenting to a plan doesn't always mean it's a person's first choice. If agreement is not reached you may need to return to the third strategy above (develop a common agreement).
Implement	Develop an action plan for the tasks and nominate: who, when and how they will be achieved. Set deadlines for each task.

Other strategies for fostering team input

Team leaders can foster team consultation in a variety of ways. Some key strategies are described below.

Develop a team charter	A team charter requires input from all team members to be effective. It clarifies the purpose, goals, roles and responsibilities of its team members. All members sign the charter verifying their commitment to it.
Use electronic communication to facilitate team input	Email and online discussions are useful for gathering ideas and facilitating team input. Newsletters and briefings can also be used to give and receive information and feedback.
Schedule planning meetings	Regular planning meetings provide team members with an opportunity to express ideas and concerns. It also allows for reflective thinking where mistakes from the past are discussed and ideas for improvements are incorporated into future planning.
Establish mentoring and buddy systems	Mentoring and buddying systems improve team member relations and promote one-on-one discussion. In these situations, team members are more likely to offer suggestions with little fear of being criticised.
Use training and development activities	By training your team members, you extend their knowledge and capabilities and increase their opportunities to contribute to the team's efforts.

Example

One way of fostering team consultation

In an early childhood centre in outer Sydney, the Director and owner meet on a regular basis to discuss issues and current projects. Today, they are meeting to examine the results from a recent survey that collected data about the service's relationships and connections with the local community. They have summarised the findings and are discussing the best way to present the information to staff.

They decide that a staff meeting will be a good forum to discuss the results and determine the duties and actions that have arisen as a result of the survey. They want all staff to be given the opportunity to put forward their ideas on how the survey information can be used to improve the way the service develops and maintains its relationships with the local community.

As a part of the discussion with staff, decisions will need to be made on the best course of action. The Director and owner decide they will need to narrow down the options and then use a consensus method to determine the more popular options. If they are unable to reach a consensus with the group, they will ask for a vote. They decide that a small working group will be needed to implement the actions; they decide that staff can nominate to be part project. If there is little interest from staff, then the Director will approach staff who have the skills and knowledge that would be beneficial to the project.

✏ Practice Task 4

1. Which of the following statements describe the way team members can be encouraged to be involved in planning, making decisions and operational aspects of the team? Select all that apply.

    ☐ Inclusive decision-making processes

    ☐ Input into team direction, such as through development of a charter

    ☐ Using methods of consultation

    ☐ Performance monitoring processes

    ☐ Training

    ☐ Implementing policies and procedures

2. Outline two strategies that can be used to help a team reach a consensus decision.

2B Develop or modify policies and procedures to promote accountability

All members of a team must feel a sense of personal accountability for the outcome of the team's efforts.

Accountability occurs when a team member accepts the responsibility for achieving their performance requirements, and willingly adjusts their performance as required to meet expectations.

Accountabilities may include responsibilities as defined in position descriptions, policy and procedurals documents, codes of conduct, duty statements, and statements outlining responsibilities, actions and performance expectations. These documents include measurable performance indicators that allow both the team leader and member to monitor and adjust performance to meet the agreed expectations.

Awareness of policies and procedures helps ensure all team members are aware of their roles and responsibilities.

Establish team ground rules

Team ground rules are a set of standards that address how individuals treat each other, communicate, participate, cooperate, support each other, and coordinate joint activities.

Team ground rules establish accountability, improve team cohesion and ensure all team members are working toward a common goal. They can be used to guide team communication, processes, behaviour, levels of interaction, reporting lines and more.

Ground rules can take some time to establish, as they are tested and debated by team members. Once fully endorsed by the team members, these rules can be enforced through reminders and team process checks. They should be added to and revised as needed.

Effective ground rules must be:

➢ achieved through consultation with the team
➢ agreed to by all team members
➢ followed by all team members
➢ monitored for equity and consistency and changed if required by team agreement.

Policies

A policy is a formal internal document that sets out the commitment, objectives, expectations and standards that need to be achieved in a given topic.

The aim of a policy is to explain a systematic approach to team performance by establishing the broad goals and the process for achieving them.

Policies are implemented to ensure that all employees and employers know how to follow an organisation's way of completing tasks. They also reflect legislation, regulations, codes of practice, standards and guidelines. In early childhood education and care, many policies reflect the compliance requirements of the National Quality Standards (NQS), which outlines the seven quality areas relating to expected best practice in all aspects of the education and care services environment.

For more information, access the *Guide to the National Quality Framework* (aspirelr. link/nqf-guide-pdf), which details the quality areas, standards and associated elements, including references, links and an assessment guide.

Job roles and responsibilities must comply with the relevant policies to ensure accountability, compliance, consistency and quality.

The reasons why policies should be followed are explained below.

Constraints

Every task has constraints surrounding it and policies and procedures provide a framework for team members to operate effectively within these constraints.

Responsibilities

Policies and procedures enable managers and team members to clearly understand their responsibilities and take responsibility for their own work.

Accountability

Policies and procedures set out clear reporting structures and clarify the key accountabilities of team members.

Improper action

Policies and procedures enable managers to decide whether an employee's improper action or decision was due to poor judgment or to an infringement of the rules.

Individual freedom

Policies and procedures provide individuals the freedom to make decisions in the execution of their duties within defined boundaries and reduce the need for over-control (micro-management) by managers.

Working effectively together

When the team procedures are clearly defined and understood, individuals feel they can do a significant portion of their work independently. Without such clarity, team members are likely to waste too much energy negotiating roles, rather than focusing on the task.

Standard operating procedures

Procedures are the steps that need to be followed to complete a task to the right standards, as explained in the designated policy.

Procedures are the steps that outline how to achieve the commitments and expectations set out in the policy statement. Most large organisations employ the use of standard operating procedures (SOPs) across many operational areas of the service. These documents are unique to the individual service, but are based on legislation, child-centred practice, duty of care and quality assurance, safety at work, privacy issues, discrimination laws, etc.

A procedural document can be a contractually binding component of a job role or team activity. They ensure consistency in the way work is conducted. Each team member needs to understand procedural instructions and seek clarification and advice if necessary. A SOP usually includes:

> a statement of the procedure's purpose
> the procedural steps or methods to follow
> who the procedure applies to
> the responsibilities of those following the procedure.

Develop or modify policies and procedures

Policies and procedures assist team members to take responsibility for their own work and actively achieve team objectives.

There is no single structure for a team policy or procedure. Each document must accurately reflect the unique needs and operations of the service. In many cases, an acceptable format may be a one paragraph statement of intent, followed by the required procedures. A document, such as a policy, would usually include:

> a statement of the expectations for the behaviour of team members
> an outline of what and who the policy applies to
> the responsibilities of team members in relation to adhering to the policy

A variety of policy and procedures documents are available online. You can view them to gain an understanding of the information, structure and language style required. You should always apply caution when researching online and contextualise policy documents, so they reflect the service's practices and unique characteristics.

Each policy should accurately reflect the unique needs and operations of the organisation and:

➤ be developed in consultation with team members to reflects current practices

➤ be appropriate to the nature of the team and to the key areas of responsibility

➤ include a commitment to achieving organisational goals

➤ include a commitment to comply with organisational policies and legislative and regulatory requirements

➤ be documented, implemented and communicated to all team members

➤ be available to all stakeholders to read and comment on drafts and final versions.

➤ be reviewed periodically so it remains relevant and can be updated with improvements.

Allow team members to be involved in the development or modification of team policies and procedures, especially where tasks and roles are delegated. They will be more willing to accept responsibility if they feel they had a say and contributed to the team planning process.

Guidelines for writing policies and procedures

Take your time, consult and do your research to ensure your policies and procedures accurately reflect the needs of the service.

Many organisations use existing online versions and templates of policies, adapting the wording and making minor amendments or modifications to suit their workplace. This may be acceptable as a starting point; however, it does not mean that the policy will be relevant or compliant with the legislative and regulatory requirements. For example, legislation may have changed or the organisational structure may have altered.

When sourcing information or samples of policy and procedures, access only reputable sources. Here are some sources for childhood education and care setting:

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)	aspirelr.link/acecqa
Early Childhood Australia (ECA)	aspirelr.link/early-childhood-australia
National Outside School Hours Services Alliance (NOSHSA)	aspirelr.link/noshsa
Community Child Care	aspirelr.link/ccc-inc
Family Day Care Australia	aspirelr.link/family-day-care
Department of Education	aspirelr.link/department-of-education
Gowrie Australia	aspirelr.link/gowrie-vic

Another common mistake when writing a policy relates to legislation. It is not advisable to use legal jargon or copy word for word legislative provisions from acts and regulations.

Each policy should represent the unique conditions and requirements of the individual workplace and provide relevant information to its staff and managers; for example, on rules and standards that must be adhered to.

An effective policy will take the legislative and regulatory provisions from the law and contextualise it into everyday workplace terms that workers and stakeholders can understand.

Key guidelines for writing effective business policies and procedures

> Write the policy in plain English and consider the language and literacy levels of your audience.
> Be straight to the point and use clear and concise language.
> Avoid legal jargon, complex language and long paragraphs.
> Aim to communicate as simply and effectively as possible, as appropriate for the intended audience.
> Do not attempt to cover every possible interpretation and issue of the policy, and do not try to accommodate all exceptions, which can complicate its understanding.
> If an action is mandatory, use the word 'must'. If the action is recommended, use 'recommended'.
> Use the present tense and active voice where possible.
> Avoid gender-specific pronouns: for example, use 'they' instead of 'he or she'.
> Where acronyms are considered helpful, give the full term/title before using the acronym: for example, General Manager (GM).

Example

Diversity policy

Here is an example of an introduction or opening statement to a diversity policy

Philosophy

We believe in having a workforce that comprises people from a range of backgrounds and of varying ages, genders, abilities and outlooks. We believe that our organisation will prosper and grow by effectively utilising staff and their full range of capabilities and by valuing their contributions. The organisation will ensure that all employees and potential employees are treated fairly and equally in accordance with relevant Commonwealth and state/territory legislation.

✎ Practice Task 5

1. What needs to be considered when developing or modifying a policy or a procedure document? Select all that apply.

    ☐ Be made available to all stakeholders to read and comment on

    ☐ Be appropriate to the nature of the team and current practices

    ☐ Developed then distributed for comment from team members

    ☐ Refer to legislative and regulatory requirements

    ☐ Be reviewed regularly so it remains relevant

2. Explain the process you would use to develop a policy or a procedure document for a work team.

2C Provide feedback to team members

An essential element of any performance management process is providing quality feedback to those being appraised.

Effective performance management involves the provision of regular and useful feedback. You want your staff to understand that feedback is a technique you will employ frequently. They must be comfortable receiving it and expect it as a matter of course.

Respect is a vital component of providing meaningful feedback.

When your staff anticipate feedback as the rule, and not the exception, they are less likely to be intimidated by it and more likely to see it as a beneficial summary of exactly how they are performing.

Benefits of feedback

Feedback gives the team the opportunity to identify exactly how they are performing and make any necessary improvements.

Feedback is a crucial part of a performance management system. It allows individuals and teams to reflect on their performance, understand their weaknesses or deficiencies and, where perceptions are involved, clarify discrepancies or points of misunderstanding.

Feedback helps to improve workplace communication and allows team members to know what they do well, and what areas are in need of improvement.

Benefits of feedback
➤ Helps improve job performance while promoting professional and personal development
➤ Improves staff morale and reduces confusion regarding expectations and current performance
➤ Reinforces good behaviour
➤ Maintains goal-directed behaviours
➤ Influences future performance goals and increases desire to achieve even higher goals
➤ Creates awareness of poor performance or inappropriate behaviour

Types of feedback

Structured, formal feedback helps the team achieve and maintain peak performance.

There are several types of feedback tools and techniques that can be delivered regularly to team members. Each technique has its own time and place, depending on the nature of the information being discussed, the experience of

the team member and the relationship between the director/manager and the team member. Some organisations offer a reward as an incentive to complete the work within a timeline. However, a reward needs to be desirable; it doesn't need to be monetary or a gift, it could be recognition from a senior manager or your success could lead to another opportunity within the organisation.

Positive feedback	
	➤ This type of feedback reinforces good behaviour by describing how and why certain actions have resulted in a positive outcome.
	➤ Often, people don't know why they have done a good job. While a 'pat on the back' is appreciated, it does not highlight the specific area of activity that should be reinforced. Positive feedback provides this information.
	➤ For example, 'That last newsletter you prepared was excellent. You obviously spent some time getting it right, and I've had several parents comment on how they found it easy to read and very thorough! Well done.'
Constructive feedback	➤ This type of feedback methodically builds on experience that the person has obtained through their work practices. This is done by providing concrete steps for future improvement that relate to behaviours or skills they have demonstrated up to that point.
	➤ It is not always positive, but positive feedback may be used to capture the attention of the person prior to providing constructive directions.
	➤ For example, 'You summarised the changes in legislation, but it was still too complex for most of our families. Maybe next time, ask some of the other staff to read a draft – or I can happily do that as well.'
Negative feedback	➤ Despite the name, negative feedback can be a very positive tool. Negative feedback refers to the content of the feedback and not the means by which it is given.
	➤ If an individual fails to meet a KPI (key performance indicator), then providing feedback to that effect is negative.
	➤ Negative feedback should always be counteracted by constructive and positive feedback to maintain personal self-worth, value and self-esteem.
	➤ For example, 'The newsletter was not good enough, and you left out some of the information we discussed. It's unlike you to do that, you are usually so thorough!'
Destructive feedback	➤ This type of feedback aims to punish the behaviours seen by the supervisor as negatively affecting the business or the workplace. It is easy for this type of feedback to become personal and emotive.
	➤ Destructive feedback reduces the efficacy, motivation and self-esteem of staff.
	➤ For example, 'That is the worst newsletter I've read in a long time. Do you really think families want to read rubbish like that?'

Formal and informal feedback

Formal feedback is scheduled and structured, whereas informal feedback is given in the moment when a manager identifies an opportunity.

Formal performance reviews with team members are not a substitute for good communication within the workplace or for timely informal feedback. Team members who consistently perform above standards should not have to wait months to know that their work is appreciated. Managers and team leaders should not assume that, because certain behaviours are obvious to them, they are equally obvious to the team. Informal, daily feedback needs to remain consistent with the principles above.

Sometimes it is possible that the feedback is so routine or informal that the team member misses the message or doesn't even realise that feedback has taken place. When giving informal feedback (both positive and constructive criticism), it is useful to reinforce this with a personal email or memo.

Formal feedback	➤ Feedback that is given through an organisational process that require all staff to participate in
	➤ Examples include annual reviews, performance checklists, written warnings and group appraisals
Informal feedback	➤ Feedback that is provided to staff in everyday work situations
	➤ This feedback is often given verbally, during or just after tasks have been completed and usually comes in the form of conversations

Provide regular feedback

Regular feedback means giving workers ongoing information and advice about specific tasks, outcomes, decisions, issues or behaviours.

Like any relationship, feedback is critical to encourage, value and reward team members' efforts and contributions. A leader is responsible for providing regular constructive feedback to team members regarding their progress towards achieving the expectations and goals.

In a workplace there is usually ample opportunity to provide feedback to staff. This feedback may take on a variety of forms.

Water-cooler discussions

'Water-cooler' discussions are informal discussions held in a neutral area of the workplace. It may be in the staff room, or outside the work environment. The aim of this approach is to reduce any feelings of intimidation and reduce the perception of authority. It is a means of freeing discussion from specific tasks and allows generalised conversation that raises overarching issues.

Workstation coaching

This refers to any one-on-one coaching provided by the supervisor to the staff member in their place of work. This feedback aims to improve knowledge and skills in a specific area of the persons performance where formal training or evaluation is not deemed appropriate.

Informal discussions

When poor performance is identified in a staff member, an appropriate action to take is an informal discussion with them. In some instances, the poor performance may be due to circumstances outside the work environment and over which the person has no control.

Staff meetings

Ad hoc workplace meetings can be held to discuss issues as they arise. These could be safety issues or other performance-based changes where feedback is required.

Provide constructive feedback

Team members must receive regular constructive feedback if they are to maintain awareness and motivation in their work.

There may also be times when you have to give negative feedback to team members. While positive recognition should always be done publicly, any negative feedback or correction should always be done in private, so as to not embarrass the person.

Feedback is to be constructive so team members don't feel belittled.

Before giving feedback about poor performance or behaviours, ask yourself the following questions:

> Why are you assessing this staff member?
> On what functions, skills, behaviours, or activities is this feedback based?
> On what standards is this assessment based?
> What are the facts of the situation?
> What do you plan to do with the results of your feedback?

If you can answer all these questions satisfactorily, you can be sure that the need to provide feedback is appropriate in the situation, and you are doing it for all the right reasons.

Steps to providing quality feedback

1   Remove emotion before providing feedback.

2   Begin with positive feedback regarding areas of performance in which the individual has shown improvement or is meeting the standards.

3   State the areas of performance where the individual has not met the agreed standards.

4   Ask if there are any reasons for the individual's lower performance and actively listen to the response.

5   Ask the individual for suggested methods of meeting standards in the future.

6   Negotiate approaches for improvement over the coming period.

7   Agree to and set the new standards.

8   End with a positive comment. This may be congratulating the person on their useful suggestions or highlighting other areas of outstanding performance.

Example
Giving feedback on a job well done

Lillian has recently started running small group sessions with children. She wants to know how she is progressing and asks her supervisor, Ivan, about her performance.

Ivan provides some constructive advice and identifies an area he feels that Lillian could improve.

Lillian feels disappointed at first. She thought she was doing really well; however, she thinks about the feedback for a while, then realises the following:

➤ Ivan raised a really good point and something that was really useful.
➤ Ivan had been honest and caring in his feedback and she appreciated this.
➤ If you want to improve you need to learn, and this can be challenging.

Lillian makes some notes and writes down some questions she could ask Ivan to get some clear direction.

✐ Practice Task 6

1. Which of the following are appropriate feedback methods? Select all that apply.

☐ Performance appraisals

☐ Verbal feedback given as part of another discussion

☐ Team meeting update

☐ Written performance warning

☐ Thank you letter from management

2. Which of the following statements demonstrate benefits of providing feedback to team members? Select all that apply.

☐ Team members can see their input has been considered

☐ Team members can adjust their practices accordingly

☐ Team members can see when their suggestions are not feasible

☐ Team members won't make further suggestions

☐ Team member engagement and contribution to further consultations

2D Develop processes to identify and address issues

Managers must develop and implement specific processes to ensure that any issues raised by the team are resolved promptly.

As a leader, it is important that you resolve issues quickly to minimise the impact on safety, productivity and the cohesion of the team. encourage the use of problem-solving to address commonly experienced problems because this will build self-sufficiency in staff and free up your time.

Prompt resolution of problems requires that you recognise and act on these situations as soon as they occur.
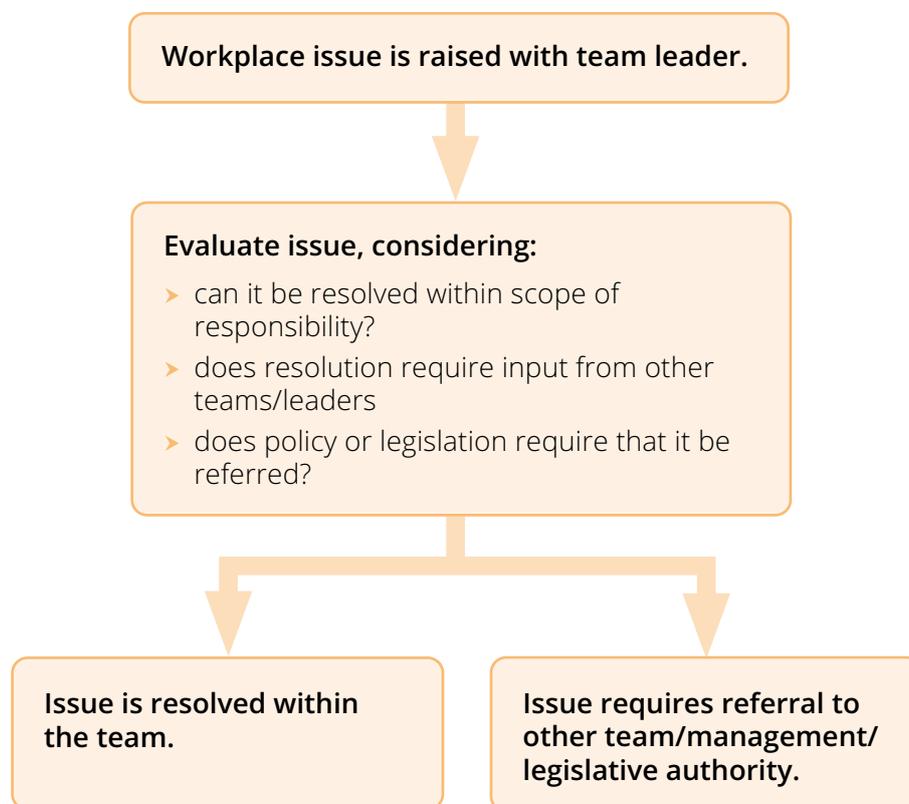
Develop processes to resolve problems

Having a process to address commonly experienced problems will provide to the team and can save time.

As a leader it is good practice to promote clarity and proactivity in your team. This can be achieved by developing processes to address commonly experienced problems. Such processes will allow your team to be clear on the steps to take (should a specific issue arise) without having to seek your input (unless the specific situation requires it). Do not wait for problems to occur that present major operational issues for your organisation and result in your team not meeting goals. Demonstrate the benefits of avoidance strategies, early detection and swift action.

Processes to encourage the team to resolve problems should include:

➤ details of who to ask for help, such as specialists – internal or external to your organisation
➤ contingency plan and examples of other situations that could impact the resolution of a problem –such as a team member going on leave or calling in sick
➤ reward and recognition for using initiative.

If you have problems you think your team members could help you with, ask them for assistance. You could include a regular five-minute session during team meetings where you ask if any problems have occurred or are anticipated, problems that might impede progress.

An open communications policy is another valuable process for resolving problems. If team members want to raise issues with you in a private setting, as opposed to a public meeting, they should feel able to speak freely with you; for example, about problems involving other staff members or sensitive issues.

Tips for resolving problems

➤ Talk to your colleagues or other Directors who may have experienced a similar problem to see if they have useful advice.
➤ Do some research or read books about problem-solving, seeking information on tested theories or frameworks you could apply to your workplace.
➤ If your problem is deciding between options, list the pros and cons of each. This can help clarify thoughts and identify options to deliver the greatest benefit.

Develop conflict management processes

Conflict is an inevitable part of working life.

Developing strategies to manage conflict fairly, thoroughly and in line with organisational requirements helps to promote an acceptable outcome for all parties.

Most performance problems result from strained relationships between individuals, not from deficits in the skills or motivation of staff. Whether the problem is a dispute between team members or departments, misunderstandings with a family or between you and a colleague, remember that if there is never conflict or disagreement – it could mean that your team is apathetic or uncommitted.

Disharmony can eventually lead to positive change by forcing the resolution of a difficult situation. Often, problems fester because no-one knows how to define them or what to do about them. Inaction ultimately undermines the smooth functioning of the organisation and the quality of a person's work life.

When conflict occurs, a team leaders' role is to listen to each party and negotiate a solution. Unresolved and ongoing conflict can lead to poor team morale and impact workplace culture. There are several ways to get the parties together to discuss and collaborate a solution:

➤ Provide a forum for the parties to air their differences, understand each other's points of view and come to an agreement. This can be done in a safe environment where the team leader acts as a mediator and helps the parties find a common ground or way to move forward.

➤ Staff meetings can be used to discuss tensions and work together to solve problems that affect the whole workplace, such as divisions between groups that result from differences in values, opinions and beliefs.

➤ Informal opportunities for discussion are useful, as they may defuse a situation before a small difference escalates into a bigger issue.

Strategies for handling conflict

Using strategies that seek to de-escalate the emotional response can lead to quicker and more appropriate resolution.

During a conflict situation it is only natural that emotions run high. Anger and distress rarely solve problems or lead to objective thinking. Actions taken in the heat of the moment often lead to a situation becoming worse, not better. Whether you're directly involved yourself or helping others through a situation, often taking a break from discussions, getting fresh air or focusing on other tasks for a while can help. Other strategies are outlined below.

Use a deferral technique

If you or someone else is considering putting feelings in writing, use a deferral technique: write down what you want to say but do not send it immediately; put a draft aside until you're feeling calm and then reconsider your words to decide whether you need to send it at all.

Discuss misunderstandings

If there is an obvious problem, draw attention to it and talk about how it can be resolved. Often the parties will be relieved that the matter has been brought out into the open. Of course, it isn't appropriate to react every time you see the slightest sign of friction.

Acknowledge the other party

If you are in conflict with another party, let the other party know they're being heard. Often this is all that is needed to defuse the situation. Showing open-mindedness demonstrates that you will treat their concerns fairly. Listen actively and ask critical questions to explore the situation. Rather than trying to solve the disagreement yourself, ask 'What do you think needs to be changed?' or 'How can we resolve this?'. While open questions are often effective, avoid asking why. Asking vague questions does not help identify the source of the problem and 'why' questions often make people defensive.

Be aware of different behaviours

Be aware of the difference between passive, aggressive and assertive behaviour. You could arrange for you and your team to have some training in conflict management that focuses on the benefits of assertive, rather than aggressive or passive, approaches to workplace problems and conflicts. Assertiveness is a valuable skill to acquire. Through training and awareness, everyone can learn to use assertive techniques in their workplace and in their everyday lives.

Dispute resolution processes

Dispute resolution processes are usually formalised in an organisation's policies and procedures and provide a framework for resolving issues where informal methods are considered inappropriate or may have failed.

Many organisations have a formal framework in place to help parties deal with issues that cannot be easily resolved. It is in everyone's interests for management to take the initiative in developing processes for dispute resolution and for all parties to be encouraged to use them.

It may be, however, that a dispute process requires immediate escalation. This is particularly relevant where the conflict or dispute may impact on legislative requirements; for example, discriminatory or bullying behaviour. You should refer closely to your organisation's policies and procedures or seek advice from a human resources expert.

Example of a general conflict resolution process:

1 **Summarise the problem**

State the issue, facts, feeling and concerns. Define the problem in terms of organisational or team requirements and expected performance or behaviours and what is currently being produced by the worker.

2 **Search for mutually acceptable solutions**

Ask the worker to contribute toward a healthy solution. Encourage the person to explain how they can improve their performance moving forward.

3 **Evaluate the possible solutions**

Discuss the possible outcomes of each solution. Consider whether they are practical, realistic and will contribute toward helping the person getting back on track within a reasonable period of time. Add your feedback using objective language in conjunction with the STAR/AR feedback model: Explain the current situation/ task; the workers proposed actions; and the likely result; follow this up by providing a refined or an alternative (more appropriate) action; and its result. Avoid agreeing on solutions that are unreasonable or place unfair expectations on the worker.

4 **Decide together**

Encourage ownership and a shared commitment of the solution. Ask the worker to summarise their role in implementing the solution and encourage them to explain the benefits of improving. Summarise the actions, including roles and responsibilities, give encouragement and praise and reinstate the value of following through on the agreed steps.

Example
Resolving conflict

Joan is an experienced team leader with 21 years at an early learning centre in regional Queensland. She says the most common conflicts that arise with staff involve pay and rostering. She notices that negative comments and attitudes in one person can upset the group dynamic overall.

'The strategy I use when I have to deal with conflict of any type can be broken down into four steps. The important thing is to understand the other person's viewpoint and perspective. So I sit down with them and ask questions.

'I start by asking them what's wrong and let them vent their emotions. Then I ask questions to find out the reason behind their behaviour. Getting to the source is vital before anything else can be done. People often talk in generalisations such as "Everyone ignores me", "I'm never asked to give a presentation" or "People don't respect me". So then I ask them to give me specific examples. In this way I'm guiding them to focus on the issue and not their emotions. For example, "Why do you think people have that opinion of you?"

'I then encourage them to find solutions. For example, "What can you do to improve the situation?" I encourage them to think of responses such as "I could contribute more at meetings"; "I could take on a project so I can use my skills to help the business"; "I could be more accepting of other people".

'I then ask them to accept or not accept the solution. They generally accept if they are the one who has suggested the solution.'

Group dynamics and team performance

Group dynamics are unconscious, psychological forces, or undercurrents, that influence behaviour and performance.

If you have responsibility for managing the performance of a team or an organisation, you need to be aware of the way in which the individuals within it interact and the effects this has on other team members and the team as a whole. This is often referred to as group dynamics.

Often people in groups adopt distinct roles and behaviours. Dynamics are created by the nature of the work, personalities within the team, their working relationships with others and the team's work environment. Group dynamics can support team performance through positive behaviours, or hinder it through negative behaviours that result in unproductive conflict, mistrust and demotivation, for example.

Teams or groups with positive dynamics trust one another, make decisions collectively, take responsibility for their individual and team performance and hold one another accountable. People's behaviours in groups with poor dynamics can disrupt work, impede decision-making and lead to poor choices.

Some behaviours that commonly affect group dynamics are listed below.

Negative behaviours	Positive behaviours
Giving too much advice or instruction	Promoting teamwork and shared problem-solving
Belittling or undermining team members	Accepting and welcoming diverse opinions
Attempting to persuade (without listening); the 'hard sell'	Employing and encouraging active listening
Censoring ideas and giving precedence to only one opinion	Conveying empathy and welcoming objective assessment of each idea
Talking too much or dominating discussion	Letting others speak and gently interrupting dominators to call on other individuals to present their views
Remaining silent and impassive	Contributing whenever possible and encouraging contributions by asking questions, boosting confidence and giving credit
Displaying negativity or disinterest	Taking on more challenging and active tasks such as gathering information, taking notes or making presentations
Continually arguing against others	Encouraging positive attitudes, remaining calm, allowing everyone to contribute to discussion

Strategies to improve team dynamics

In most cases, leaders need to be proactive to alleviate potential conflicts and other issues that can impact on group dynamics.

Leaders need to demonstrate initiative by planning for the key issues that can impact on the dynamics of their team. This means being aware of the different personalities and behaviours in the team and forecasting the range of issues that might occur.

Some useful strategies for improving or maintaining good team dynamics are shown below.

Strategies for improving group dynamics
Understand the phases of group development; for example, Tuckman's stages of forming, norming, storming, performing and adjourning. Adjust your leadership style to suit the stage.
Deal with problems quickly and fairly, and provide constructive feedback.
Ensure that team roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.
Keep communication channels open and clear.
Watch for signs of poor group dynamics and respond with corrective action.

✏ Practice Task 7

1. Which of the following are correct? Select all that apply.

☐ Leaders are responsible for resolving all problems.

☐ Bullying should be resolved quickly without referral to other parties.

☐ Team members should be encouraged to seek out solutions to problems

☐ Talking through a conflict with other leaders only confuses decision-making.

2. Number each step from 1 to 4 in the order you would follow to address an issue.

☐ Resolve issue or refer to others

☐ Evaluate options for resolution

☐ Person raises issue with leader

☐ Seek further information on nature of issue

3. Which of the following statements are effective ways to address conflict? Select all that apply.

☐ Arrange to meet the parties so you can help resolve their issue.

☐ Advise the parties that failing to agree will result in a formal warning.

☐ Brainstorm all potential solutions.

☐ Encourage commitment and cooperation from the group.

☐ A solution may be unreasonable but often the expectations of staff are too high.

4. Provide one positive and one negative effect group dynamics can have on a team's performance.

Summary

> Decision-making as a teams can occur with consensus or voting. Consensus occurs when all participants agree to a team decision. Voting adopts the classic democratic approach in which the majority rules.

> Consultation can be used for exploring new and innovative ways to perform work tasks and resolve problems.

> Team policies and procedures improve accountability and clarify responsibilities and expectations of performance.

> Policies create expectations for action and procedures provide the means by which the actions can be carried out.

> Giving feedback is a key responsibility of leaders. Leaders see the benefits in their staff, including increased job satisfaction and morale.

> Processes that resolve workplace issues can empower staff to make their own decisions.

> Conflict is an unavoidable part of working life and it is important that it is managed and resolved in line with an organisation's policies and procedures.

> The use of effective interpersonal skills such as listening, discussing issues in a calm and non-judgmental manner and negotiating outcomes is useful in this regard.

> Group dynamics affect the way in which the individuals interact as well as the effectiveness of the team as a whole.

Learning Checkpoint 2
Develop and facilitate team cohesion

Part A

1. Identify three methods to help involve a team in planning, decision-making and developing the operations related to team tasks.

2. Explain a process that leaders can use to encourage staff to contribute to the resolution of issues affecting their roles.

3. Suggest three things to consider when giving feedback to team members.

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4. How can feedback can be used to encourage, value and reward individuals or the team as a whole?

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5. Which of the following behaviours will produce a positive impact on group dynamics? Select all that apply.

☐ Accepting and welcoming diverse opinions

☐ Conveying empathy and welcoming objective assessment of each idea

☐ Remaining silent and letting others speak

☐ Taking on more challenging and active tasks

☐ Being impassive and casual about the opinions of others

6. Draw a line to match each step in the consensus decision-making process to its correct definition.

* Clarify and amend the chosen proposal	* Share information and make sure that everyone fully understands the issue or problem.
* Implement	* Gather initial ideas and reactions. Identify all the issues and discuss the pros and cons of each alternative solution put forward. Narrow down the alternatives: eliminate some and short list others.
* Explore the issue and discuss alternative solutions	* Identify proposals that consolidate the best elements of the ideas presented and look for a solution that satisfies stakeholders' main concerns.
* Check for and reach agreement on the outcome	* Ensure that all remaining concerns are voiced and considered. Look for possible amendments that make the idea more acceptable.
* Clarify the issue	* Ask if anyone disagrees. Explain that consenting to a plan doesn't always mean it's a person's first choice. If agreement is not reached you may need to return to the third strategy.
* Look for developing ideas and common agreements	* Develop an action plan for the tasks: nominate who, when and how they will be achieved. Set deadlines for each task.

Part B

Read the following case study and the answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Ethan is the team leader at a service called ChildCare , based in a small country town. He moved to the town three months ago to take up the role and is slowly getting to know his team, their roles and backgrounds.

Many of the staff went to school together or know each other socially. While this can make for a very friendly environment, it does sometimes mean that social issues are brought into the workplace. Two of Ethan's team, Alice and Kyra, used to be very close friends but fell out following an incident at a social event.

Alice has come to Ethan saying that Kyra is deliberately ignoring her , not passing on messages and generally trying to make her look unprofessional and unproductive.

1. Kyra advises that Alice has been bullying her. What process would Ethan need to follow to resolve this issue?

2. Write a policy statement that will help build accountability within the team and improve staff behaviours.

3. What specific information would a procedure related to resolving conflict need to contain? List this below and explain your answer.

Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

3A   Encourage responsibility for team activities

3B   Support the team to resolve work performance problems

3C   Promote team collaboration through your behaviour

Facilitate teamwork

An effective team supports each other and works closely together to achieve team goals.

To facilitate teamwork, a manager must support their team to identify and resolve work performance problems and promote team collaboration. This can be done by modelling the type of behaviours desired by the team.

3A Encourage responsibility for team activities

Successful teams take full responsibility for their behaviours and performance.

Getting staff to take responsibility can be a challenge. Gaining commitment from each team member is a process starting with the establishment of KPIs and agreeing on roles and responsibilities. Effective teams also need good communication processes, including reporting to each other, sharing knowledge and resolving issues of concern.

The performance equation

The performance equation describes the two key elements of a performing team: capacity and commitment.

This is a simple tool that team leaders can use to monitor individual contributions and make necessary adjustments to improve performance. Written as a formula, this concept can be expressed as:

Performance = Capacity x Commitment

What you notice in this equation is that performance is the product of two factors: capacity and commitment. If either of these factors is zero, the performance result will be zero. In addition, the relationship of capacity to commitment in this equation is such that adjustments to either factor will affect performance.

Capacity to perform

In a work setting, the capacity to perform means having available the competencies, the resources, and the opportunity to complete the job.

Capacity is the first key element of the performance equation. If team members are missing the competencies, resources, and the opportunities to complete their work, it will not get done and the results will not be achieved.

In other words:

Capacity = Competencies x Resources x Opportunity

The components in this equation are defined below.

Competency	Competencies are the abilities or capabilities to do something. Team members have a range of competencies and they need to have their competencies considered when being matched to a task. Team leaders must also provide opportunities for team members to acquire those competencies.
Resources	Team members must be given the resources they need to do their jobs effectively. If they have the skills but lack the resources to perform, the job will not get done. Resource requirements can be physical, human and/or financial.

Opportunity	Team members need to be offered opportunities to use their knowledge, skills and abilities to contribute to team outcomes. The team structure needs to support different members being given/offered a range of roles.

Encourage team commitment

Commitment refers to the individual's willingness to perform the tasks.

The level of individual commitment is often the key determinant of whether a team meets its targets or not. To be effective at fostering team commitment and ensuring members take responsibility for their results, an organisation's systems must be designed with three basic principles in mind: focus, influence and consequences.

Focus

Teams need to share a clear goal that links directly to the organisation's goals. Within the team, each member should be clear about their roles and responsibilities, including agreements on individual expectations and standards of performance. To ensure ongoing focus, consider:

> clearly communicating and continually emphasising the team's goals and purpose
> linking individual performance requirements to the overall purpose
> avoiding unnecessary distractions by assigning work priorities.

Influence

Teams need to be able to influence and control their systems of operation and how they achieve their goals. Similarly, team members need to have influence over those with whom they are interdependent. Holding teams jointly accountable for their combined results will only work if the people within the team can influence each other's behaviour. Consider the following strategies for establishing influence:

> Promote self-management of problem-solving
> Empower team members to suggest adjustments to the makeup of the team if required, such as an additional set of skills are needed.
> Foster an environment where regular feedback can be given between team members

Consequences

If a team is to be held accountable, they must accept the consequences of their own actions as a team. This means the whole team is held accountable for the performance of each member. In a team-based organisation, coaching and correcting individual performance problems is as much a team responsibility as a management responsibility. Ensure that teams get direct and regular feedback from those involved with the project and link rewards to team output.

Encourage responsibility

Each member of a team will have a unique set of skills and there will be particular tasks or jobs that only they can complete. Nevertheless, all team members should be expected to contribute the same amount of effort and commitment to their team.

Leaders can use communication strategies to encourage team members to take responsibility for their results.

Initial communication

Initial communication should involve face-to-face meetings where the team leader and the team members can openly discuss roles and responsibilities. Leaders should make sure that team members are made to feel that they can be fully involved in the discussion and openly express their opinions, beliefs and preferences.

Involvement in decision-making and communicating outcomes

Involve team members in the decisions about team activities, KPIs, roles and responsibilities (i.e. seek input from team members). Following this, the leader should communicate the information contained in those decisions in such a way that:

➤ The message is complete and specific.

➤ The expectations for each role are clarified and documented for use in the Performance Appraisal process.

➤ Each team member understands their role and the roles of the other members.

➤ Requiring that team members to report to each other

Communicate regularly

Team members need to be kept up to date about changes to team activities, KPIs, roles and responsibilities.

This can be done via:

➤ board rooms or 'meeting spaces' designated solely for team discussions and meetings

➤ email

➤ video conferencing or collaboration application tools

➤ cloud-based storage spaces for the sharing of documents.

✐ Practice Task 8

1. Think about a team with which you are familiar, describe three key actions and communication methods undertaken by team members that demonstrate their responsibility for the activities of the team.

2. What are the two key elements that leaders need to focus on, in order to encourage team members to take responsibility? Select all that apply.

☐ Performance and pay

☐ Capacity and commitment

☐ Competence and clarity

☐ Commitment and willingness

☐ Competencies, resources and opportunity

3B Support the team to resolve work performance problems

When work-based issues arise, effective teams solve the problems efficiently and as a part of the team's overall processes.

Issues should not derail a project or place undue pressure on team cohesion. If risks have been adequately assessed, the team should be able to carry out contingency plans when they occur.

Problems that may impact the team include:

> managing change within the team, such as people leaving, new members being recruited or a change to the team's objectives (e.g. the scope of the project being enlarged or reduced).
> personal factors affecting team members' contributions and personal problems
> insufficient training and level of skills leading to mistakes, lack of quality, etc.
> insufficient resources, which may be due to budget restraints or resources were not fully identified from the beginning
> barriers to communication, such as cultural differences or due to miscommunications using digital messages (e.g. email)
> differences in values or philosophies between team members, or inappropriate behaviour such as discrimination, bullying or harassment
> timelines not realistic resulting in stress and poor outcomes.

Identify work performance problems

Problem identification is a process of considering the context of the organisation's operations and the possible issues that could impact the achievement of objectives.

Identifying operational problems is paramount to effective planning, in particular identifying and addressing risks. It requires leaders to identify where the project is currently positioned along its timeline, looking for gaps in performance, and determining possible causes for delays and underperformance, as well as quality or financial issues. The following strategies outline ways to support your team in identifying problems.

Regular meetings	> Meetings provide an excellent forum for discussing and sharing information.
	> Regular reviews allow you to adjust, react or plan for work tasks and issues in advance. This makes it easier to resolve problems that may arise in the future.

Feedback and quality control	➤ In most organisations, feedback from stakeholders, such as other staff, local government of families, is commonplace. Information sources can be used to identify current or possible future issues.
	➤ The purpose of quality control processes is to provide a system of regular feedback for managers and staff so that you can recognise opportunities for improvement before problems arise.
	➤ Receiving regular feedback allows you to identify trends over time. These trends provide important information regarding the success or failure of various aspects of the organisation.
Problem-solving	➤ To support your team to solve problems, you need to provide effective tools and techniques (e.g. problem-solving skills).

Effective problem-solving tools

Some problem-solving tools to use with a team are outlined below.

SWOT analysis

Analysing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats affecting your project. By thoroughly considering each aspect of the competitive environment, you are able to develop answers to help maintain your advantage.

Cause and effect diagram

A line diagram linking outcomes to potential causes and vice versa. This diagram allows you and your team to consider possible causes and effects that represent potential risks to your work. By generating these causes and effects, you are in a better position to rectify any potential risks.

Affinity diagram

Organises your ideas, problems and/or solutions into common themes. This helps you and your team identify common issues that may be the cause of problems or that may lead to future issues.

Risk analysis

Analyses the probability and consequences of risks you and your team have identified. This helps to place a priority on those risks that you determine as high or the most likely to cause an issue.

General appreciation

Uses the experience and observations of you and your team to consider methods of solving problems and identifying potential issues.

Brainstorming techniques

Useful technique when problems are difficult to solve. Consider brainstorming multiple solutions using the input of capable team members and stakeholders. Once a range of ideas is produced, you or your team can then analyse each by applying criteria such as cost versus effect or risk probabilities.

Groupthink and poor decisions

Groupthink occurs when a group makes faulty decisions because of group pressures.

When considered from the context of solving work problems, group pressure can result in group members holding back personal viewpoints and ignoring alternatives.

The problems that can arise from groupthink are summarised below.

Eight symptoms of groupthink and their effects	
1. Illusion of invulnerability	Creates excessive optimism that encourages taking extreme risks.
2. Collective rationalisation	Members discount warnings and do not reconsider their assumptions.
3. Belief in inherent morality	Members believe in the rightness of their cause and therefore ignore the ethical or moral consequences of their decisions.
4. Stereotyped views of out-groups	Negative views of the 'enemy' make effective responses to conflict seem unnecessary.
5. Direct pressure on dissenters	Members are under pressure not to express arguments against any of the group's views.
6. Self-censorship	Doubts and deviations from the perceived group consensus are not expressed.
7. Illusion of unanimity	The majority views and judgments are assumed to be unanimous.
8. Self-appointed 'mind guards'	Members protect the group and the leader from information that is problematic or contradictory to the group's cohesiveness, view and/or decisions.

✎ Practice Task 9

1. Identify two ways you could support your team to identify work performance problems.

2. Draw a line to match each problem-solving tool to its correct description.

    *   Risk analysis

    *   General appreciation

    *   SWOT analysis

    *   Cause and effect diagram

    *   Affinity diagram

    *   Analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats affecting a project in a competitive environment.

    *   A line diagram linking outcomes to potential causes and effects.

    *   Organises your ideas, problems and/or solutions into common themes.

    *   Analyses the probability and consequences of risks you and your team have identified.

    *   A range of ideas is produced, that can then be analysed by applying criteria such as cost versus effect or risk probabilities.

3C Promote collaboration through your behaviour

Collaboration involves using the experience of the team and considering their input to make decisions about work plans that impact on operational performance.

Allowing team members to collaborate in the planning and decision-making processes is a great way to ensure they feel valued and respected. Moreover, it is important to gain consensus within the team on subjects that will require their full cooperation and input; for example, ways to finish a project on time or manage a customer service issue.

There are many advantages to the collaborative approach including synergy, information sharing and greater diversity of outcomes. Collaboration also leads to an improvement in team cohesion.

Collaboration promotes a feeling of inclusivity and allows all team members to feel valued in an organisation.

Improving collaboration within a team should involve:

➤ role modelling the required behaviours of the team
➤ establishing ground rules
➤ being aware of the features of a cohesive team
➤ promoting interaction between team members
➤ setting clear attainable goals and priorities
➤ clarifying and negotiating roles
➤ stressing teamwork and ownership
➤ providing leadership support to the team
➤ facilitating task accomplishment
➤ acknowledging good work.

Role model desired behaviours

A role model is a person whose behaviours and actions are emulated by others in order to develop those skills and attributes in themselves.

A role model can be anyone who positively influences others in the work team and enhances the organisation's image to a wide range of people.

Team leaders can model the practices and behaviours they want to encourage. When a leader is seen to be doing the things that they have asked of their teams, they are more likely to gain the trust, confidence and cooperation of their team members.

By understanding and acting on this one principle, you will go a long way to becoming an effective leader. While effective leadership can mean different things to different people, there are some common traits that people look for in their leaders.

Use the list of common traits shown here as a personal checklist to assess your own leadership abilities.

Team interactions	> Involves team members in planning, goal-setting and decision-making
	> Encourages interactive communication with team members
	> Listens to staff, peers and customers with an open mind
	> Help staff develop the habits they need to be more successful
	> Empowers staff to make decisions
	> Is skilled in managing group process issues
	> Does not micro-manage effective and trusted staff
Work environment	> Inspires and motivates people around them to perform above and beyond expectations
	> Communicates their vision for the future
	> Uses assertiveness to obtain the necessary resources and support for the team
	> Protects the team from undue and counterproductive outside interference
Personal	> Is willing to learn better methods of doing things
	> Is receptive to both positive and negative feedback
	> Embraces diversity and is highly receptive to ideas and people who are different
	> Apologises and admits mistakes
	> Shows empathy
	> Has a sense of humour
	> Acts ethically and is trustworthy
	> Is willing to adapt as conditions change and the needs of the team evolve

Inspire team members

Getting people to accomplish something is much easier if they are inspired by their leader to do so. Inspire means 'to breathe life into' and involves the three actions outlined below.

Be passionate

In organisations where there is a leader with great enthusiasm about a project, their teams adopt higher levels of enthusiasm and motivation. Be committed to the work you are doing. If you do not communicate excitement, how can you expect your team members to get excited?

Know what your team is about

Teams are made of people, not numbers, computers or data. Great leadership starts with your ability to interact, understand and communicate with your team. Know what your team thinks and feels by questioning, listening and interacting with them regularly and genuinely.

Example
How a Director gained the team's respect

A new Director was employed to replace a retiring senior leader. One of the key requirements for the new position was to bring about change the current 'stale culture' among staff. Some key issues identified are listed below:

➤ Too many individual staff and not enough 'team'
➤ Rosters not allowing enough flexibility, leading to unhappy educators
➤ Lack of innovation and new ideas to refresh the programs

To help establish a more unified team, the Director facilitated a series of team-building workshops that included problem-solving exercises to test to the ability of staff to work together and make group decisions.

From feedback received after the workshops, the staff identified they had gained new insights into those they worked with and identified how they could operate more effectively as a team. Through the exercises, the team could see that the outcomes were much more effective than they were able to achieve on their own.

✎ Practice task 10

1. Which of the following methods are likely to create a collaborative workplace culture? Select all that apply.

☐ Modelling the desired behaviours to team members

☐ The use of verbal and non-verbal descriptions of task goals

☐ Establishing guidelines for collaborative work that includes respectful communication

☐ Instructing workers to stay in their program areas and focus on the children

☐ Affirming when team members meet deadlines

2. Think about a person you admire professionally. List at least six personal characteristics that make them an effective role model.

3. Reflect on your own characteristics as a leader. Identify two areas that you could develop to improve your performance as a role model and suggest ways to develop these characteristics.

Summary

- Performance evaluations can monitor individual contributions and make necessary adjustments to improve productivity (provided the capacity and commitment of the team is established).

- For a team to be effective, all members need to participate in, and take responsibility for their results and the team's activities.

- To encourage individuals to take responsibility, leaders must use clear communication, encourage involvement in decision-making and communicate outcomes on a regular basis.

- Group problem-solving has three distinct phases: exploring the problem, searching for solutions, and evaluating and carrying out your actions.

- Groupthink occurs when group members would rather maintain the group's favour than cause friction, state opposite points of view and evaluate the full extent of alternatives.

- Collaboration means working with team members, using their experience and considering their input to make decisions about work plans that impact on operational performance.

- A role model is a person whose behaviours and actions are emulated by others in order to develop those skills and attributes in themselves.

- When a leader is seen to be doing the things that they have asked of their teams, they are more likely to gain the trust, confidence and cooperation of their team members.

Learning Checkpoint 3
Facilitate teamwork

Part A

1. Which of the following methods are likely to create a collaborative and productive workplace culture? Select all that apply.

☐ The provision of accurate and respectful feedback

☐ The use of verbal and non-verbal descriptions of task goals

☐ Establishing guidelines for collaborative work that include respectful communication

☐ Instructing workers to stay in their direct work areas to focus on their task

☐ Affirming when staff meet their deadlines

2. Identify three ways you could encourage team members to participate in and take responsibility for team activities. Make sure a communication strategies is included in your list. For each strategy, include one example of how you would apply it.

3. Provide two examples of problem-solving models you might use to support the team in identifying and resolving problems. Briefly explain each model and use examples in your explanation.

Problem-solving model	Description	Application example

4. Draw a line to match each of the qualities required of a model to its correct description.

*   Effective communicator

*   Effective listener

*   Inspiring and motivating

*   Visionary

*   Provides clear direction and displays passion for the task and outcomes

*   Communicates a picture of the future

*   Focuses on the person speaking, providing verbal and nonverbal confirmation that they are listening, paraphrasing and questioning to confirm understanding

*   Provides a clear, consistent message to team members using appropriate methods

Part B

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

Case study

As the national manager for a large organisation with early learning centres across Australia, you are responsible for recruiting, developing and monitoring staff. Your staff currently consists of 23 full-time educators and 12 contract educators

You work out of the Brisbane office and you try to visit the other centres at least once a quarter. This year, due to the constraints of COVID-19, you have been unable to meet staff face-to-face. You have been hearing complaints from many of the staff regarding the lack of support they get from head office, and particularly from you as their manager. As you reflect on the challenge to support each of these centres, you realise you cannot do it on your own—you need help.

1. Outline a brief plan to encourage each centre to take responsibility for their team activities. Your plan should include:

   ▶ opportunities for each centre to have some control and manage their own teams
   ▶ the structure of the teams
   ▶ opportunities for collaboration between each of the centres
   ▶ a mentoring program between more experienced educators and less experienced staff and team leaders.

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Topic 4

In this topic you will learn about:

4A Maintain open communication with stakeholders

4B Address issues raised by team members and stakeholders

Liaise with stakeholders

A manager must be able to communicate effectively with their team about issues and concerns.

They need problem-solving skills to resolve issues as well as an intimate knowledge of when to escalate an issue with other stakeholders.

4A Maintain open communication with stakeholders

Leaders play an important role in the transfer of information.

Leaders need to effectively communicate with team members, management, and to other team leaders, peers or colleagues. As a leader, you are responsible for ensuring information about team performance and operations are effectively communicated to staff and key stakeholders.

As discussed in Topic 1, a stakeholder is any person or group who has a 'stake' in the organisation. A stake refers to a degree of influence on the service, and the way it impacts on operations. Stakeholders can be internal or external. They can have a direct or indirect influence on planning and operational processes. They can include internal and external customers (children and families), colleagues, support staff, suppliers, room leaders, educators and anyone else who is affected by what the team does.

Transparent communication helps ensure all stakeholders are informed of key decisions.

The way in which you communicate with your stakeholders will vary according to their needs and the organisation's policies and procedures. The overall culture of an organisation is based on the lines of communication or reporting protocols. For example, some tasks need to be escalated if:

> issues are beyond the authority or scope of the team leader to resolve

> approval is required as stated in a policy such as for spending or for a new team initiative

> an issue arises that are complex or require the input from other areas of the organisation is the service has access to these staff such as business manager, human resources, finance officer, etc.

The lines of communication between all parties that work together need to be open, direct and consistent. If the lines of communication are closed, indirect or inconsistent, the workplace culture can become tense and stressed.

Plan stakeholder communication

Leaders should consider the information needs of internal and external stakeholders.

The method of communication, type of information, timing and purpose of communication may change and will need to be reviewed as necessary. A communications plan is a document that helps provide a roadmap for consistent communication with stakeholders so that they feel informed and up to date with progress reports.

Communications plans do not need to be long. A typical plan requires the following:

Key concepts communicated
Audience description
(diversity, topic familiarity, assumptions, etc.)
Required resources
(location, equipment, staff, etc.)
Communication methods and techniques used
(slideshow, role-play, panel discussion, questioning techniques, etc.)
Techniques used to deliver information
Relevant policies/procedures
Documentation
(handouts, presentation slides, statistical analysis, reports, summary of research etc.)

Communication channels

The size of the organisation, the time sensitivity of the issue and importance of the message dictate the communications tools.

There is a wide range of communication channels and tools to choose from. A mix of communication tools allows for the ongoing flow of information between management, teams and other key stakeholders. This might include a web-based conference tool, phone call or messaging tool – such as email or an online chat function.

Downward channels	A message that flows from the top of an organisation down to a lower level of the organisation Examples are: ➤ vision and mission statement ➤ policies and procedures ➤ code of conduct
Upward channels	Information that flows from the team up to management Examples are: ➤ enrolment reports ➤ spending reports ➤ complaints ➤ ideas to improve the organisation
Sideways or horizontal channels	Communication between different centres, teams or individuals across the organisation.
Diagonal channels	Communication between different lines of authority such as support of admin staff to educators.

Report team performance to stakeholders

Reporting needs to inform your key stakeholders on the performance of your team.

Reporting means sharing information, notifying stakeholders of achievements, problems and issues you experience, and communicating progress. Reports can vary depending on the information requirements of the stakeholder and the organisation's reporting policies or procedures. Variations in reports can include the frequency of reports(e.g. weekly, monthly, quarterly), templates and style guides for the presentation, format requirements (e.g. a compliance requirement) or a list of resources used and their costs.t.

Team performance can be reported in various ways; for example:

➤ As a one-off snapshot summarising a current situation or outcome of a project.
➤ By comparing results over a period to show improvements or indicate change.

Reports must be professionally written and provide a clear and accurate picture. This means it must be checked to make sure it is reliable, valid, current and detailed.

Reports should have a clear and logical flow and structure, so your stakeholders can easily read and find the information they are looking for.

Standard structure for a business report

➤ Report title
➤ Executive summary
➤ Introduction
➤ Findings
➤ Recommendations

Example
Business report template

Report title

➤ Name of the report
➤ Name of person that the report is intended for (e.g. Attention: Board of Management)
➤ Date
➤ Who compiled the report

Executive summary

➤ Summary of key findings, high-level points and recommendations of the fuller report

Introduction

> What was monitored
> Monitoring system used
> Data sources and collection methods

Findings

> Presentation of information and evidence, including successes and issues
> Objective analysis of the operational results achieved, including trends, patterns and forecasts
> Variations in performance from the operational objectives

Recommendations

> Changes that need to be implemented moving forward in order to meet team objectives

Relaying information to team members

Leaders need to effectively communicate information to their team members.

Leaders need to communicate with team members about team performance; for example, any changes to the purpose, roles and responsibilities or team objectives. Effective communication helps keep the team informed on their progress and work quality; it also provides encouragement and encourages the completion of milestones. Regular updates on team performance helps prevent issues and provides the framework to manage them promptly. Several approaches that can strengthen communication are provided below:

Open-door policy	This means you will be open to your team members' efforts to communicate with you. It means providing an easy, secure and respectful communications channel with your team when they need to communicate about important matters.
	Effective open-door policies include strict ground rules. For example:
	> if you are talking with someone, you should avoid being interrupted
	> if someone else is handling a matter, the team member should endeavour to communicate with that person in the first instance
	> conflicts between team members should be mediated by those team members before raising the issue with you and so on.

Motivation	A successful leader learns and understands what motivates their team. They ask questions and pay attention to the needs of their team in order to understand their personal motivators. This information can be used to manage performance and also improve communication and trust as a genuine interest is developed in those you manage.
Team environment	Create a team environment by focusing efforts on the team's purpose, while ensuring all members of the team feel respected and valued for their contributions. Like any relationships, these require constant work. Holding regular formal and informal meetings with team members and displaying genuine interest in the pursuits of each member (where practicable) will encourage this environment. When team members feel you are unapproachable, they will keep information from you that can hamper performance and damage your effectiveness as a leader.
Regular meetings	Regular meetings allow for the sharing of information and ideas, as well as offering the chance for people to interact socially and professionally. Successful meetings must be kept as short as necessary, on topic, and must not be viewed as interfering with normal work operations; rather, they should be recognised as a vital part of work operations.
Forums	Forums are central hubs for ideas, comments, concerns and information sharing. Today, most forums are internet-based; however, scheduled meetings can also provide a forum for discussion on matters involving the team. An important purpose for conducting forums, other than the communication of ideas, is to openly invite the input of every member of the team. This demonstrates your respect for the ideas from individuals and can help build trust and a positive working relationship amongst team members and management.
Mediation	Poor communication can lead to disagreements and conflict. It can be helpful in these circumstances to seek the input of a third party to act as a mediator or third person to be present that can act as a calming influence or can diffuse a situation. This person may be known to all parties such as an HR representative; or external, such as a negotiator. These people can offer unbiased advice to overcome issues and suggest better forms of communication to suit the specific needs of the team to avoid issues in the future.

Example

An open-door policy

ChildCare Inc. has adopted an open-door policy for all staff. The purpose of this policy is to encourage open communication, feedback and discussion about any matter of importance to staff. This open-door policy means that staff understand they can speak with the Director or team leader at any time.

Responsibilities

If any area of an employee's work is causing concern, they have the responsibility to address that concern with a manager. Whether they have a problem, a complaint, a suggestion or an observation, managers want to hear from their staff. By listening to their team members, the company is able to improve, address complaints, and foster understanding from staff of the rationale for practices, philosophies and decisions.

✎ Practice Task 11

1. Identify three communication tools/channels you can use to convey information to stakeholders.

    _____

    _____

    _____

2. Identify three strategies that may improve communication with stakeholders.

    _____

    _____

    _____

3. Which of the following statements relate to communication channels?
   Select all that apply.

☐ A report on staff breaches of a code of conduct is an example of upwards communication.

☐ Sideways communication is a policy document being shared with staff across the organisation.

☐ Approval to purchase resources needs to be reported quarterly in a report.

☐ The number of complaints from families over a period is information that flows to management.

☐ An issue beyond the authority or scope of the team leader, needs to be resolved by the team

4B Address issues raised by team members and stakeholders

Leaders are often required to communicate unresolved issues to a team leader, owner or Director.

From time to time, you will be required to listen to performance-based problems (short-falls) or unresolved issues from the team. This will require you to follow-up on behalf of your team.

Most issues can be resolved at the team level. When you report a serious issue to management, they will give you immediate advice so you can rectify the situation. You will then need to communicate information to team members from management.

Taking the time to listen to team members' concerns ensures you understand the problem in order to solve it.

Issues that can affect workplace relationships and team cohesion include:

> tensions between staff
> problems related to work roles and responsibilities
> grievances and complaints from stakeholders.

There are many skills required for issue resolution and these skills can be learned and practised Some of these are listed below.

Nonverbal communication	> Look for the nonverbals such as body language, facial expressions, posture, gestures and tone of voice. Be aware of your own body language. > How people feel about conflict will be apparent in their body language, they may avoid eye contact, cross their arms, roll their eyes, act in a defensive, aggressive or non-caring way. > Try to stay relaxed and open. Breathe deeply and calmly. Respect personal space and be aware of your facial expressions. Avoid making sudden movements and do not stare.
Active listening	> Know when to stay quiet. Focus on the words and nonverbals the person is communicating. Ask questions to clarify points that are unclear to you. Let the person explain themselves, in their words. Ask open-ended questions. Allow all parties to express themselves equally.
Empathy	> Acknowledge feelings and try to put yourself in their shoes. Ask questions about how that made them feel and the reasons they give for being upset. Be patient. Be aware of and respectful of differences.

Patience	➤ Rushing to a solution can make people feel like they're not being heard and they're not part of the solution process. Take time to listen, allow for silences. People often do not like to be wrong and will often hold their stance until they're proven right or wrong.
Objective and impartiality	➤ Staying calm and objective when emotions are high is very difficult. Partiality will only intensify conflicts.
	➤ You need to remain level-headed in order to think rationally about a solution that is good for all. Vent before or after.
	➤ Don't take things personally. This conflict only involves your professional role. Never attack the person. Talk about the problem, not the person.
	➤ Prioritise resolution over being right. Know when to apologise and forgive. Remain focused on the conflict at hand rather than past ones.
Positivity	➤ Being positive will ensure the resolution process progresses forward. Positivity can be contagious. Share your confidence that there will be a solution.
	➤ Demonstrate a willingness and positive outlook to compromise. Model behaviour you wish to see in all parties.
Open communication	➤ Maintain open communication so that relationships can continue after the conflict is resolved. This is critical for relationship management and work objectives. It's important not to feel resentful and to accept compromise in an open and positive manner. Remember the importance of this relationship.

Use a problem-solving process

When a member of the team has raised an issue, you have an obligation to evaluate it and take the necessary corrective action.

Determine the urgency of the situation and, if the problem needs immediate resolution, act decisively. However, before you escalate the issue, make sure you have:

➤ gathered the facts and the varying opinions
➤ analysed the information
➤ challenged and reviewed your assumptions
➤ assessed each option.

The eight disciplines (8D) of problem-solving uses a team orientated approach for solving problems.

Each step of the process and desired outcome is outlined below.

The 8D problem-solving process

1

Define concern, organise and plan

> Identify the concern or problem.
> Put in place a project plan for eliminating the problem and improving the process – including scope, key activities, boundaries, responsibilities, timelines, resources, etc.

2

Describe the opportunity or problem

> Write the problem statement in terms of the gap between 'as is' and 'desired state'.
> Define the non-conformance in terms of 'what is wrong' (the defect) with 'what' (the object).
> Determine the quantity, size, volume, magnitude of the non-conformance.

3

Contain the problem

> Implement interim actions to shield the customer from the problem.

4

Identify and verify root causes

> Select root causes to work on.
> Revise the problem statement if required.
> Produce a list of as many ways as possible to solve the problem.

5

Develop corrective action plan

> Decide on an optimum corrective action/solution and plan its implementation.

6

Implement and verify corrective action

> Perform a pilot test.
> Evaluate the effectiveness of corrective action or solution.
> Document improvements.
> Address open issues.
> Remove the interim actions to ensure the problem does not re-occur.

7

Prevent recurrence

> Apply a permanent 'fix'
> Identify what system, practice or procedure allowed the root cause to occur.
> Modify and monitor to prevent recurrence of problem.

8

Celebrate and communicate success

> Recognise the contributions of everyone involved.
> Communicate the changes or improvements to all individuals who are affected.

Communicate back to the team

The leader is the first point of contact between team members and the person they report to.

If management identifies a problem that your team needs to manage, you will be the first point of contact. You must then relay that information back to your team in a prompt manner.

Often language and communication can get 'lost in translation'. This is demonstrated in a children's game in which players whisper a message into the ear of the next player, who repeats the message to the third player and so on. When information is passed onto you from upper management, it is important that you take notes, ask questions for clarity and paraphrase to ensure you have interpreted the situation correctly.

Once information is gathered, you must communicate it back to the team so everybody is aware of any new developments that affect the workplace.

When you are ready to relay the information to your team members, it is important to model and instil the same communication principles into them.

Communication principles
➤ Be clear about your message and instructions
➤ Ensure staff take notes
➤ Encourage discussion and questions
➤ Check for understanding
➤ Follow up with a written communication, such as an email outlining what was discussed or any instructions

In some cases, you will be able to report an issue to management, receive their advice, and return to your team to rectify the situation. In other cases, the issue will be more complex and may take time or resources to resolve.
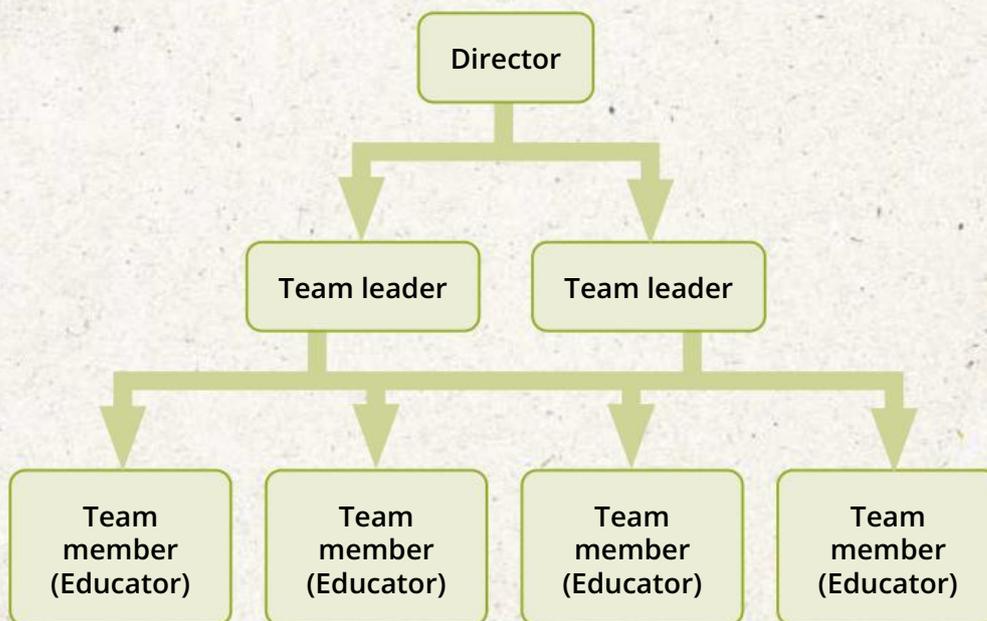
It is still important for you to continue to evaluate the issue and listen to the concerns raised by team members. In other words, don't allow team members or management to get the impression that you have forgotten an issue or no longer deem it a priority.

If you think the Director may have forgotten about your issue or does not appear to share your concern of the importance of the issue, you can remind them how the issues impacts the effectiveness and performance of the team. They will often be grateful of the gentle reminder.

Example
Respect the chain of command

The concept of 'chain of command' identifies that reporting to more than one source of authority can potentially create conflict and confusion. This principle is important when hierarchy and reporting lines are necessary to ensure information and instructions are communicated exactly; for example, in the military or armed forces when instructions ensure the safety of soldiers. In business, organisations still follow the chain of command principle, but flexibility and responsiveness can vary according to the formality of the work environment.

For example, in a larger organisation, a project team can be made up of staff from several areas who all report directly to their team or project leader. Once the project has been completed, staff return to their regular roles and their reporting lines change. Educators may report to team leaders; team leaders may report to their manager; managers' may report to the owners or to a board of management. Some organisations use an organisational chart that illustrates reporting lines:

```
                        ┌──────────────┐
                        │   Director   │
                        └──────────────┘
                   ┌────────────┴────────────┐
                   ▼                         ▼
          ┌──────────────┐          ┌──────────────┐
          │ Team leader  │          │ Team leader  │
          └──────────────┘          └──────────────┘
        ┌────────┴────────┐        ┌────────┴────────┐
        ▼                 ▼        ▼                 ▼
   ┌─────────┐  ┌─────────┐  ┌─────────┐  ┌─────────┐
   │  Team   │  │  Team   │  │  Team   │  │  Team   │
   │ member  │  │ member  │  │ member  │  │ member  │
   │(Educator)│ │(Educator)│ │(Educator)│ │(Educator)│
   └─────────┘  └─────────┘  └─────────┘  └─────────┘
```

✏ Practice Task 12

1. Which of the following communication skills help manage workplace issues? Select all that apply.

    ☐ Ability to block out discussion of the issue when you need to complete work

    ☐ Impartiality when managing conflict between others

    ☐ Being efficient and getting the matter resolved asap

    ☐ Being empathetic towards the issues of others

    ☐ Active listening when communicating with others

2. Which of the following relate to following up on issues and conflicts raised by your team? Select all that apply.

    ☐ Complaints from families that have been going on for some time need to be followed up as a priority.

    ☐ Gather the facts and different opinions from staff and analyse them before escalating an issue to management.

    ☐ Most issues and conflicts relate to families and will need to be referred to a person of authority.

    ☐ Send daily reminders to a manager so they understand the importance of the issue you are dealing with.

    ☐ The team need to understand that managers are busy people who will get to their issues when they have time.

Summary

- As a leader, you will be responsible for communicating information about team performance and operations to managers, team members and other key stakeholders.
- The way you communicate with your stakeholders will vary according to their needs as well as the organisation's policies and procedures.
- The lines of communication between all parties that work together need to be open, direct and consistent.
- If communication lines between staff, management and team members are closed, indirect or inconsistent, the workplace culture can become tense and stressed.
- A mix of communication tools allows for the ongoing flow of information between managers and staff.
- Communication can improve through an open-door policy, by nurturing a team environment, by holding regular staff meetings.
- Once issues have been identified and communicated to management, it is crucial that action is taken to resolve the issues and there needs to be accountability for the issues raised.

Learning Checkpoint 4
Liaise with stakeholders

Part A

1. Which of the following information should be included in a report on team performance? Select all that apply.

    ☐ Summarise the current situation of a project.

    ☐ Include detailed recommendations to improve team performance.

    ☐ Explain in general terms the team's performance.

    ☐ Provide a clear outline of the issues experienced by the team.

    ☐ Present your report to your key stakeholders based on agreed reporting procedures.

    ☐ Include as many graphics and images as possible to make it more engaging.

2. Identify three things to consider when communicating issues and performance to stakeholders.

3. Identify two strategies to enable effective communication between management and team members.

4. Explain the term 'upward communication' and provide two examples of how it can help resolve issues within a team.

Part B

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

> ## Case study
>
> David often uses offensive language in the staffroom when talking with other staff. He thinks it's funny and anyone complaining should just 'get over it'. After receiving several complaints from other staff, and after witnessing the language yourself, as David's supervisor, you decide to speak to him.

1. Give two examples of who you would you speak to for assistance in resolving the issues with David, and briefly explain the focus of the communication.

2. Identify two ways to address the unresolved issue concerning the team member.