CHCINM002
Meet community information needs

Learner Guide

Updated to include
National Quality
Framework changes

Aspire
Learning Resources

CHCINM002

Meet community information needs

Release 1

Learner Guide

Aspire Version 2.1

**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 *CHCINM002 Meet community information needs*, 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
T1	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
T1–T3	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
	Early Years Learning Framework
	Principles
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
T1	Partnerships
	Respect for diversity
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives
	Equity, inclusion and high expectations
	Sustainability
	Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning
	Collaborative leadership and teamwork
	Practice
	Holistic, integrated and interconnected approaches
	Responsiveness to children
	Play-based learning and intentionality
	Learning environments
T1	Cultural responsiveness
	Continuity of learning and transitions
T2	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
	4. Children are confident and involved learners
	5. Children are effective communicators

Topic 1

In this topic you will learn about:

1A   Identifying stakeholders

1B   Identifying information requirements

1C   Collecting and maintaining information

Identifying information requirements

You need to manage information and communicate with a range of people every day. This information should be presented in ways that suit particular stakeholders.

The methods you use to communicate should be informed by the needs of your service's stakeholders. Once these requirements are identified, you need to collect and maintain current and accurate information on the prioritised issues and services.

1A Identifying stakeholders

The people who need information the most are your stakeholders. These are people who are linked to your service in some way.

To meet the information expectations of stakeholders, you have to clearly understand their needs, interests and backgrounds, including the communities they live in. You will find that many characteristics of these stakeholders link to your own service context through:

Understand who your stakeholders are.

> the age of children you cater for
> the community you are situated in
> the needs your service caters for
> your management structure
> your reliance on government services.

Your stakeholders are 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.

Types of stakeholders

There are three main types of stakeholders: primary, secondary and key stakeholders.

Each stakeholder has a different role to play in your service and each will require different types of information.

Type of stakeholder	Relationship	Examples
Primary stakeholders	Directly affected by the service operations	> Families > Staff > Children
Secondary stakeholders	Indirectly affected by the service operations	> Support services > Suppliers
Key stakeholders	May be primary or secondary stakeholders, but also have an important role to play in the service operation	> Owners > Employers > Directors > Funding bodies

There are numerous stakeholder target groups, including:

> current users of your service, such as families

> prospective users referred by other organisations, such as maternal child health centres or community services

> new target groups, such as people you are marketing to for the first time

> people in your geographic region that you want to share information with

> special interest groups, such as parent groups and exercise groups

> students and researchers

> workers in other organisations, such as support services or local government agencies.

Each target group can be broken down to reveal specific characteristics. The more defined the target group is, the more likely you will understand the group and meet their needs.

Example
Target groups

When Michelle was preparing information about the changed service hours, she thought that families and staff were stakeholder target groups that required the same information. She then realised that while they were both primary stakeholders, they each needed different types of information on the same topic.

Families were interested in how the changed hours would impact the fees, arrival and departure, staff were more interested in how the rosters and shifts would be affected, how timetables would change, and how ratios would be catered for.

✏️ Practice Task 1

1. Draw a line to match each stakeholder to its type.

* Allie is an educator who covers staff breaks.

* Primary stakeholder

* Sally provides a library service and visits once a week to share stories with the children.

* Primary stakeholder

* Nadu provides fruit and vegetables to the service.

* Secondary stakeholder

* Mary is a parent with two young children.

* Secondary stakeholder

* Joh is the director of the service.

* Key stakeholder

* Gwendoline is the service committee chairperson.

* Key stakeholder

1B Identifying information requirements

You might need to communicate with stakeholders for a range of reasons.

You might need to communicate with stakeholders to:

> inform them
> build an understanding
> notify them of change
> prevent a misunderstanding
> present a point of view
> reduce barriers between yourself and others.

Find out what information each target group needs.

The stakeholders and target groups you identify will each be interested in and require different types of information. Before you share information, you must find out what information these groups need and how they would best receive this.

Target group information

To meet the needs of target groups, you must first gather information and advice.

There are many mechanisms for identifying needs. Informal methods include general conversations and discussions, while formal methods include surveys, meetings, questionnaires and forms.

Respect the confidentiality of this information as it may be sensitive.

Ways to identify target group needs include:
> talking to people during orientation visits, interviews, spontaneous discussions, etc.
> collecting documents, including enrolment and registration forms
> gathering feedback through suggestions boxes, communication books, apps, etc.
> meetings – uninterrupted time when information can be exchanged and discussed
> accessing community information that reflects local research
> researching online
> observing and listening
> contacting by phone or email
> using social media such as Facebook or in-house programs like Storypark
> conducting surveys (surveys may be verbal, paper-based or online)
> asking people to complete templates or forms.

Specific questioning

When you know the details and characteristics of your target group, you will be able to communicate with them more effectively.

To collect useful information about target groups, you may wish to use questions to find out specific details.

Questions to find out about target group characteristics:

➤ What is the demographic of the group (age, income, family structure, languages, employment status, etc.)?

➤ How is the group involved in the service?

➤ How does the group prefer to receive information?

Questions to find out how well facilities, resources and programs are being used by target groups:

➤ How and when are groups using facilities, resources or programs?

➤ How successful have other facilities, resources or programs been?

➤ Is there competition or an opportunity for collaboration with other facilities, resources or programs?

➤ Are there any agencies and organisations that may support your facilities, resources or programs?

➤ Are there any gaps in your service?

Questions to find out about current or potential service users:

➤ Who is a current user and why?

➤ Who does not currently use your service? Why not?

➤ What interests could you or should you cater for?

➤ What do the target groups need from you?

Questioning techniques

When gathering feedback or information, you must be able to use questions effectively.

There are three types of questions, as outlined below.

Closed questions

Definition: A closed question is one that receives a 'yes' or 'no' response.

Example: 'Would you be interested in a behaviour guidance workshop?'

Advantages

You can be clear about the information you are seeking and limit the stakeholder to giving a concise response with only two options.

Disadvantages

You may be missing an opportunity to gather more information or details.

Open questions

Definition: An open question is likely to receive a more detailed response.

Example: 'What parenting information would you find useful?'

Advantages

Allows you to gain as much information as possible.

Disadvantages

If the person is not sure about the possibilities or doesn't have the appropriate experience or knowledge, they may not be able to give useful answers.

Multiple-choice questions

Definition: A multiple-choice question is one that provides a number of options that can be chosen from.

Example: 'Which of the following topics would you like to learn more about?

➤ Behaviour guidance
➤ Nutrition
➤ Toilet learning'

Advantages

You can be clear about what the options are. You have some control over the responses and can offer options that are within your boundaries and capabilities.

Disadvantages

There may be other information that you are not collecting due to the limited options.

You might find that the best results occur when you combine questioning methods, as in the following example.

Dear parents,

We are hoping to improve our parent resources. In order to help us support your information needs, please answer the following questions:

1. How would you like to receive information and resources? (You may choose more than one response.)

☐ Email

☐ Display

☐ Books

☐ Links to online information

Other: ....

2. Would you be happy for us to present a new topic each month? Y / N (Please circle.)

3. What topics would you like to see covered? Please provide details:

....

....

....

We thank you for taking the time to provide us with this information. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

The team at A–Z Children's Centre

Catering to different information needs

People take in information in diverse ways, which is why it is important to find out about them in order to meet their information needs.

People will need to know different levels of detail on various topics, but they will also gain information in unique ways. While some people learn best from written materials, others prefer to see visual representations and graphs.

Most people use a number of different learning styles, but often have a preference for one particular style.

Some categories of learning styles are presented in the following information.

visual

- A person who prefers a visual learning style learns more effectively with pictures, images, reading, demonstrations, seeing and looking.
- A visual person likes to take notes rather than get involved in discussion.
- Types of information most suited to visual learners include:
  - online
  - demonstrations
  - video
  - newsletters
  - emails
  - noticeboards
  - booklets.

Auditory

- A person who prefers an auditory learning style learns more effectively by listening to verbal instructions and through discussions, role-play and talking through problems.
- An auditory person may also like to use recorded material and read out loud.
- Types of information most suited to auditory learners include:
  - webinars
  - podcasts
  - learning circles
  - presentations
  - recordings
  - meetings
  - discussions.

Kinaesthetic

- A person who prefers a kinaesthetic learning style learns more effectively with hands-on experiences, touch, gestures and observing actions.
- A kinaesthetic person may need regular breaks.
- Types of information most suited to kinaesthetic learners include:
  - demonstrations
  - simulated experiences
  - displays.

By providing information in a range of ways, you will be catering to each person's preferred style of learning.

Family diversity

Families will have a range of information needs.

There are many factors that may influence families' needs. For example, a family that has a toddler may not be interested in information you are sharing about babies.

Factors that may influence the information needs of families:	
➤ the age and gender of children attending the service	➤ any special needs of children attending
➤ family income level	➤ family education levels
➤ cultural background and expectations	➤ languages spoken
➤ industries and key employers in the region	➤ availability of social service agencies
➤ availability of volunteer agencies	➤ employment status of family members
➤ availability of seasonal work	➤ availability of support and assistance for low-income families.
➤ availability of established support networks	

A family that needs information about an excursion might:

➤ read a notice and learn about where the child will be going and what they need to bring

➤ talk to an educator and find out why the children will be going on the excursion and what they will be doing there

➤ be shown how to fill out the permission form and where the bus will be parked.

Together, these methods will provide the family with all the information they need.

✎ Practice Task 2

1. Draw a line to match each question type to the question example.

* 'If I gave you a newsletter, would you read it?'	* Open question
* 'Would you rather I email, call you or meet with you after work?'	* Open question
* 'Would you prefer to access information online, in a printed book or via a presentation?'	* Closed question
* 'Is the app easy to use?'	* Closed question
* 'How could we improve the information?'	* Multiple-choice question
* 'What do you like about the program?'	* Multiple-choice question

2. Draw a line to match the method for giving information to each example.

* Listening

* Doing

* Reading

* Staff are provided with a handbook at induction. They learn about service policies through this.

* Staff attend meetings where they discuss service policies, ask questions and give feedback on procedures.

* Staff are shown how to implement new procedures. If they are unsure, they can ask their supervisor to show them again.

1C Collecting and maintaining information

The stakeholders you are targeting and the information you want from them should determine the way that you collect and communicate information.

Knowing the types of stakeholders will help you to determine the best way to communicate and gather information.

As an educator, you often provide knowledge as an expert, so you must use current and clear information that has come from reputable sources.

Collect and maintain key information.

Reputable sources

Reputable sources are ones that you can trust to provide you with accurate information.

They are generally recognised and respected bodies, or individuals with high standing. Textbooks and study materials are useful, as are fact sheets from specialists. If you use information from the internet, you should use a government-based site or one that is linked to a reputable source.

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) has the most reliable and appropriate online information about current trends in the education and care industry.

At aspirelr.link/acecqa, you will find a 'Latest News' page, along with links, libraries, fact sheets, and details for educators, service providers and families.

You may also find suitable information on government sites such as the following.

Site	Content	Website
Raising Children Network	Health and development information ranging from pregnancy to adulthood, including disability	aspirelr.link/raising-children-network
The Royal Children's Hospital	Children's health information	aspirelr.link/royal-childrens-hospital
Department of Health	Health topics, initiatives, programs and services, including immunisation details	aspirelr.link/immunisation
Department of Education and Training	Legislation and guidance around understanding behaviour	aspirelr.link/department-of-education

Maintaining relevant information

All services require basic information to be maintained and made available to stakeholders.

This enables the service to run legally and efficiently. Regularly check this information for gaps and updates. Here are some examples of information that should be kept current:

> organisation details, including the services provided and organisational operations and policies

> guidelines and legislation relating to government agencies and funding sources, including policies and statutory requirements

> family details and other specific data provided by family members (confidentiality requirements must be observed)

> network information, including which support services the organisation uses

> professional development resources, including training and development materials and documents.

Information currency

There is little point directing someone to information that no longer exists, or gives them incorrect details such as out-of-date phone numbers or addresses. Gaps in information may also provide details that lead others toward inappropriate practice or non-compliance.

To ensure the information base is relevant and current, remember to:

> add new items regularly and let stakeholders know they are available

> create a system of use that includes rules for borrowing and care of resources

> focus resources on popular issues

> vary the resources to include a range of stakeholders

> ensure brochures and other take-away resources are kept neat and tidy – they should be easy to find and topped up before they run out

> check issue dates to ensure your materials are current

> always use information that is less than 10 years old

> attempt to use Australian resources where possible.

Audits

Audits are an effective means of checking whether information is current and applicable, and may identify gaps or inadequacies.

Audits may be:

> external, such as when a representative from a legislative body comes to your service and requests documents that demonstrate compliance

> internal, such as when a staff member checks on a policy and resolves information gaps.

You may audit resources prior to providing them to a stakeholder, or at regular intervals so that you are aware of what is available and will have this ready if needed. Information that is out of date may be superseded or redundant.

Redundant information

One of the easiest ways to ensure currency is to use an online search for information that comes from a provider or another reputable source.

It is inevitable that if you collect and store large amounts of information, these items will become superseded and will eventually be unusable.

You can use the following strategies when reviewing information.

Check the details of the organisation

Make sure the organisation is still operating and can provide the right type of service to the person you are referring. Check their address and opening hours, and whether an appointment is required.

Review any information that is more than 12 months old

If funding for an organisation is budget-reliant, it may only exist for a short period or change its focus. Organisations and government bodies may change their names or be amalgamated with a change of government.

Dispose of old information

It is confusing to have multiple versions of information available. If you receive a new brochure from an organisation, discard the previous version. For in-house information, you may want to archive a copy for future reference.

Read materials prior to recommending them

Materials should be positive, easy to read and should share appropriate information. Check the credentials of the author or issuing body if needed.

Request permission to make the first contact yourself

If information is given for referral, gain permission to make the first contact yourself. This strategy will reduce the concerns of those in need of information and ensure that any links or suggestions are followed up. In addition, when you explain the information you need, the organisation you contact initially may refer you to somewhere more suitable.

Archiving information

Some information must be kept due to its legal relevance and the possibility that it may be reviewed in the future.

Information such as fee payments, injury and incident records fall into this category. Other information may be archived as it could be useful in the future.

When you archive materials you are storing them away safely in an ordered fashion. Archiving allows you to sort information so that it can be found again later, if necessary. Archiving also means that you have more space for new information.

When you archive information, follow these tips:

> Clearly label the archived information so that you can find it easily if it is needed.
> Organise the archived information into orderly sections, such as by subjects or years.
> Keep a log in your filing system so you can easily find the archived information you want, should it be needed.

Example
Updating information

You think a family would appreciate the support of a community group to assist them to settle into the area.

You check the information available and find it was last updated 18 months ago. You decide to do a quick online search on the two specific groups listed, and find that one has changed address and contact details since the information was last updated.

Before giving the information to the family, you update this information. You date when the change has occurred so that others viewing the information will be aware of when it was last updated.

You decide to do a check for all community groups listed.

Information management systems

To find and provide the information you collect and share, you may need to develop and maintain an efficient information management system.

An information management system helps you to effectively organise materials. This includes filing, archiving, displaying and providing documents.

Your service will have a range of systems in place for recording and storing information. These will include a variety of paper-based forms and summaries of computerised statistics, reports, costings and legal requirements. Each service will collate the same types of information as a basic requirement to enable continuous operation, and to provide an audit trail for compliance requirements.

Different types of information may require different types of recording and storage systems. When you understand these systems and follow service guidelines, you will be maintaining information accuracy, completion and storage requirements.

The main purpose of storing information is so that it can be retrieved when required. Information can be stored as hard copies (on paper) or as soft copies (electronically).

Here are some examples of paper-based and electronic storage systems.

Forms of paper-based storage include:	Forms of electronic storage include:
- filing cabinets - folders - hanging files - shelves - parent pockets - archive folders or boxes.	- databases (electronic lists such as 'favourites' files) - computer files, such as Microsoft Word or Excel files - emails - memory sticks/USBs - portable hard drives.

Confidentiality

In education and care services, confidentiality is critical.

A service's privacy and confidentiality policy should clearly set out the storage, use and disposal requirements for personal information.

Private information needs to be kept in secure storage in an area that is locked outside of business hours. Likewise, electronic records should be stored on a system that requires password access by authorised personnel.

How your service stores information will depend on a range of factors, as outlined in the following table.

Information storage factors	
	Quantity of information Large amounts of information are best stored as computer-based files. This not only saves space but also enables ease of access.
	Space available Paper-based storage requires more physical space than electronic storage. Information that is out of date or no longer required should be disposed of, transferred to electronic files or archived.
	Confidentiality Confidential information needs to be stored securely in locked cabinets or in password-protected electronic files. In either case, access must be limited to authorised personnel. When it comes to disposal, you may need to use a secure recycling method, such as shredding, or contact a company that specialises in document disposal.

	Access requirements
	Information that needs to be accessed frequently should be easily located.
	Cost
	Electronic storage requires regular investment in, and maintenance of, computer equipment. Hard-copy storage requires maintenance and additional space. Offsite storage may be necessary, which will come with a cost.
	Protection
	Files, both paper and electronic, need to be protected from loss or damage. Important files need to be copied or backed up by creating another copy that is stored at a different location.

Ready access

Many services provide a resource library, noticeboard and regular newsletters.

Popular information sources also include brochure displays and resource folders. More frequently, services are communicating to parents and the community through digital methods.

Some of these information methods are designed to enable ready access and do not usually need to be secure. However, if you have items that are available for borrowing, such as DVDs, textbooks or children's toys and books, you may need a secure space and a borrowing system in place.

It is a good idea to compile a support resources folder or display with a comprehensive list of items. This helps you, your colleagues, families and the wider service community to find resources to best suit their needs. You may like to include:

> business cards
> pamphlets
> information on your own organisation
> frequently asked questions (FAQs) or fact sheets.

If you prefer to go paperless, you can keep an electronic file of resources, or put them on the service's intranet or website. You can also create a list of bookmarked online resources for easy access. These computer-based approaches allow quick access to an information database.

Identifying gaps

Due to the large number of documents, records and support materials you will need to access and provide, you are likely to find gaps. These might occur due to changes in industry standards, legislative requirements, roles and responsibilities, or due to new trends or stakeholder interests. At times, this might occur when you are asked questions that you have not considered before, or when you wish to respond in a unique or individual way to a question, need or request from a stakeholder.

Example
Information management

Billie has begun her new role at an early learning centre and needs to gain a basic understanding of the service's information systems, policies and procedures so that she can provide information to families effectively.

Billie accesses the computer and takes some time opening each file, searching for titles, databases and areas where these can be found.

Billie notices that information about local community groups was last updated 18 months ago. She decides to do a quick internet search to check the information and finds that one has changed address and another has changed contact details.

✏ Practice Task 3

1. Which of the following would you identify as the most reputable sources? Select all that apply.

☐ The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)

☐ The local newspaper

☐ A government website

☐ An educator employed straight after they have completed their study

2. Which of the following is the most current information? Select the correct answer.

☐ Healthy Eating Pyramid poster (2015)

☐ The NEW Healthy Food Pyramid (2008)

☐ The Healthy Diet Pyramid (1999)

3. Which of the following factors need to be considered when storing information? Select all that apply.

☐ Confidentiality and privacy

☐ Displaying smallest to largest document

☐ Digital or hard copy

☐ Ease of access for frequently used documents

4. Draw a line to match the beginning of each sentence about identifying gaps to the correct ending.

* Before developing new materials, always consult	* so it is natural that you will, at times, find gaps.
* There is an enormous amount of documents, records and support materials	* due to changes in industry standards, legislative requirements, roles and responsibilities, or due to new trends or stakeholder interests.
* One of the many options for identifying gaps in information	* relevant stakeholders to find out their needs.
* Gaps in information might occur	* is to consult with stakeholders such as colleagues.

Summary

> The people who need information from you are your stakeholders.
> The information needs of the groups you are targeting will help determine the best way to communicate with them.
> Update your community information regularly so that you are able to respond to trends.
> Each type of information may require a different storage system. Confidential information needs to be kept secure.
> The resources you provide for others are only useful if they are properly maintained and updated.
> One method for keeping information up to date is to conduct an audit. This can be used to identify gaps or inadequacies in the information base.

Learning Checkpoint 1
Identifying information requirements

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

   a. There are three main types of stakeholders.   * Yes   * No

   b. You must provide all stakeholders with the same information when new information resources are developed.   * Yes   * No

   c. To meet the needs of target groups, you must first gather information and advice from them.   * Yes   * No

   d. During any process for gaining feedback, you must be able to use open and closed questions effectively.   * Yes   * No

   e. There are three main ways people obtain and retain information. These include typing, singing and answering questions.   * Yes   * No

   f. At times, when you find gaps in information, you may be able to access existing information to meet these needs.   * Yes   * No

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

   a. It is important to identify gaps in information resources, which could provide details that lead others toward inappropriate practice or non-compliance.   * Yes   * No

   b. Audits are an effective means of checking whether information is current and applicable.   * Yes   * No

   c. Different types of information require the use of different types of recording and storage systems.   * Yes   * No

   d. Information management systems need to be designed so that all workers have access to each other's personal details.   * Yes   * No

Developing information to meet requirements

When information is needed, you must be prepared to develop appropriate resources or be able to find and access what you need easily.

There may be times when the information you need is not easy to find, or the materials you can access are too difficult to understand. In addition, they may not be suitable for the needs of the stakeholder you are targeting. In these situations, you may be able to create your own information materials.

By being systematic, you will be able to effectively manage the material development process.

2A Determining requirements

When developing information materials, you will usually begin with an assessment of currently available resources.

Once you have identified these details, you will be clear about your direction and any gaps that are evident. Some things that might be highlighted include:

Gather information in consultation with others.

➤ issues of currency – information is out of date or redundant

➤ lack of a reputable source – there is no source for information, or the source is unreliable

➤ inappropriate format – the format is difficult to understand, unsuitable for the circumstances or unsustainable

➤ level of complexity – there is too much information, not enough information, or the details are hard to understand or incomplete.

To manage these gaps you could:

➤ research through discussion or reading

➤ gain opinions from stakeholders, colleagues or supervisors

➤ create a draft of new materials

➤ highlight areas that require additional details.

Creating a draft

A draft is an initial preparation of materials.

It involves gathering and organising your information, and determining your requirements for filling the information gap you have identified.

Use the following as a guideline for preparing a draft:
➤ Be clear about the topic. Creating a project brief, which states the aims, scope, budget and deadline, will help you to stay focused.
➤ Establish the content first before worrying about how it looks.
➤ Consult with others to explore and discuss options and details.
➤ When the content is decided on, find ideas to make the information attractive and easy to read.
➤ Ensure your information can be backed up by other resources. You could list these if they may be useful to the reader.

You might also explore topics and discussion options in consultation with users, colleagues and other stakeholders. These people may be able to provide you with an alternative view, their own experience, or ideas on where to gather useful details.

You can collect information on relevant issues and services from:	
➤ journal articles	➤ books
➤ pamphlets	➤ internet sites
➤ professional bodies	➤ government departments
➤ colleagues	➤ television programs
➤ special interest groups	➤ networks
➤ service websites	➤ non-government agencies.

Accessing existing information

Accessing information to develop new materials may involve research and/or networking.

You might find resources that you can take advantage of through some of the actions shown here.

Information source	Description	Examples
Government resources	Most government agencies and legislative bodies automatically send out information about changes in legislation or guidelines. They may also have updating services that you can subscribe to.	➤ Comcare ➤ *Child care provider handbook*, Department of Education
Subscriptions to publications	Publications, including journals and newsletters, provide up-to-date information on specific issues and areas of interest. Subscriptions may be free or purchased by your service. Publications may be sent in hard copy, emailed or accessed online.	➤ ACECQA newsletter ➤ *Everyday learning series*, Early Childhood Australia
Materials produced, provided by and about other organisations and services	These materials include brochures, posters, flyers, handbooks and websites. These provide details of service eligibility, service offerings and other specialised information.	➤ *Get up & grow*, Department of Health ➤ Noah's Ark – specialist services for children with disabilities and additional needs
Media publications and services	Media includes newspapers, magazines, television, radio and websites. These provide information about current public issues.	➤ *ABC News* (17/9/20), 'Money and kids: Learning the basics at a (very) early age' ➤ The Canberra Times (12/9/20), 'All Australians deserve universal early childhood education'

Information source	Description	Examples
Electronic networking	Networks are useful for obtaining up-to-date information and accessing materials for stakeholders. They can also be a support if you need to understand a new requirement or need advice based on experience. You can participate in forums, discussion boards and in online professional development training.	➤ Facebook group: Educators engaging with educators: aspirelr.link/educators-engage-facebook ➤ Facebook group: ECE Facilitated Learning: aspirelr.link/ece-facilitated-learning-facebook

Permissions and references

Before developing new information, check to see whether any copyright permissions are required.

Checking for permissions might include checking copyright guidelines to ensure you are using materials according to the law.

Permission may also need to be granted in relation to the use of materials, tools and resources. In some cases, you may need to access funds.

For further information, access the information sheet, *An introduction to copyright in Australia* at: aspirelr.link/introduction-to-copyright-aus

When materials or information are used from another source, you must reference their origin. A common method for referencing is:

➤ noting the name of the author, with the surname first
➤ identifying the date of development and presenting that in brackets
➤ recording the title of the information
➤ identifying the publisher.

Example
Permissions and references

Morin collected information about sustainability, which included photos of children and some text from the ACECQA website.

Morin ensured that parents of each child had signed permission to have their photos used for service purposes. Morin also referenced the information she had obtained from the ACECQA website. It looked like this:

Livingstone, Rhonda. (2018) More than a worm farm: Supporting children to be environmentally responsible. ACECQA. aspirelr.link/acecqa-sustainability

✏️ Practice Task 4

1. Which of the following statements relate to accessing information? Select all that apply.

- ☐ When you use information sourced from others, you may need to reference these.

- ☐ If I am only using information from other sources in service information, I don't need to reference these.

- ☐ I might access information from government resources or through networking to fill gaps in my own knowledge.

- ☐ I can collect and discuss information with my colleagues and users of the service. These people may have access to existing information sources.

- ☐ If a colleague needs information, it is not worthwhile asking other colleagues how they may help.

2B Presentation and formatting

Once you have collected information and determined your goals, you will be able to identify the most suitable presentation method.

Options for the presentation method will depend on how, why and who you are implementing the materials for. You will need to determine whether you are addressing an issue, asking for feedback, updating a policy or procedure, or simply providing information of interest or need to stakeholders.

Determine the best presentation method.

Presentation considerations:
➤ What is the purpose of your information?
➤ Where will stakeholders be able to find the information?
➤ What tone is appropriate to the resource (practical, professional, fun, etc.)?
➤ What mix of text and visuals will work best?
➤ What information is most important?
➤ How can you make your message easy to understand?
➤ What is a reasonable deadline (is the information needed as soon as possible, in the short term or in the long term)?

Presentation options

The way you present any type of information needs to cater to the specific needs of the individuals, groups and audiences that you are targeting.

Every person will have a preferred way of processing and understanding information. When presenting materials, consider these preferences and cater as closely as possible to those needs.

Here are some presentation options to consider.

Information for listening	
➤ Recordings	➤ Online webinars
➤ DVDs	➤ Meetings
➤ Discussions	➤ Conversations
➤ Face-to-face or digital training sessions	➤ Audio books

Information for reading	
➤ Books	➤ Reports or documents
➤ Fact sheets	➤ Emails
➤ Brochures	➤ Websites
➤ Pamphlets	➤ Maps
➤ Noticeboards	➤ Charts
➤ Posters	➤ Checklists

Information for doing	
➤ Face-to-face or live digital training sessions	➤ Diagrams
➤ Demonstrations	➤ Role-plays
➤ Checklists	➤ Case studies and scenarios

Sustainability

When deciding on a suitable presentation method, think about how you can put approaches to environmental sustainability into practice.

This can be as simple as using the strategies listed in the following table.

Reduce
➤ Send a copy of notes via email.
➤ Minimise the number of documents you print or copy.
➤ Print or copy on both sides of the paper.
➤ Buy paper made from recycled products.

Reuse
➤ Use the same paper again.
➤ Use the blank side of an information sheet for notes or as children's drawing paper.
➤ Circulate one copy of the information rather than making multiple copies.
➤ Use shredded paper for art or dramatic play.

Recycle
➤ Collect documents you have finished with for recycling.
➤ Shred confidential documents before recycling.

Formatting

Technology plays a big role in the development of information resources.

The internet, computer programs and search engines can all provide assistance when deciding how to write and format your information resources.

For example, the Plain English Campaign has a useful selection of free guides about clear writing available on its website: aspirelr.link/plain-english-uk

Some tips for formatting:

➤ Use a font and type size that is clear and easy to read.

➤ Structure the content logically using headings to group content.

➤ Use language that the target audience will understand.

➤ Be concise and avoid lengthy sentences and irrelevant details.

➤ Add pictures or diagrams to clarify meaning.

➤ Include adequate white space in your design and layout.

➤ Avoid fancy fonts and light text on a dark background.

Developing formatting skills

If you plan to create information materials in a range of formats, you may need to develop new skills.

This could include learning to use new software for word processing, desktop publishing and webpage development.

Digital technology has many capabilities, and software applications are available for preparing a wide range of materials and resources. The most commonly used software applications are programs such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Publisher, and Apple products such as Pages and Keynote. There are also many open-source (shared use) software applications, such as OpenOffice, which are low cost and have many of the same features as proprietary software (owned by an individual company).

You can find help for using these software applications online or through video tutorials.

Many internet sites provide hints on how to develop specific presentations. Here are a few ideas.

Useful internet sites for information creation

Make a brochure

Online PC Learning: aspirelr.link/make-a-brochure

Create fact sheets and action alerts

The Health Advocacy ToolBox: aspirelr.link/health-advocacy-toolbox

Useful internet sites for information creation	
	Produce your own marketing leaflets The Marketing Donut: aspirelr.link/marketing-donut
	Poster basics NYU Libraries: aspirelr.link/create-research-posters

Digital media

Digital media is currently the most popular method for sharing information.

Through digital media, staff, families and other stakeholders can keep up to date. When the technology supports an option for people to provide their own thoughts and ideas, a community develops, and people become involved and active.

Stakeholders may have busy work and personal lives, and sometimes a text message, email or social media post is all that is required to enable more individuals to read and respond promptly to information.

The internet, tablets and smartphones can be used for a wide range of purposes, as outlined below.

Ways in which devices allow information to be shared:
➤ Posting on social media
➤ Engaging in forums, meetings and discussion boards
➤ Emailing photos or anecdotes of children at play
➤ Forwarding service promotions, policies and procedures
➤ Sending reports or other information to specialists
➤ Displaying and sharing material through programs such as Storypark, LIFT, ChildCarers or QK Technologies
➤ Organising appointments
➤ Managing fees, budgets and invoices

Example

Adopting a digital approach

Zeta has been looking closely at sustainability in her service as she feels not enough is being done in relation to the amount of paper being wasted. She feels the review process for policies and procedures is particularly wasteful. She decides to bring this up at the next staff meeting and places this item on the agenda.

Zeta decides she will need some notes and suggestions to present to the team at the meeting to enable change. She uses her iPad to list points for discussion and takes this with her to the meeting. During the meeting, Zeta refers to her list on her iPad and makes notes of comments from others. She suggests that rather than using paper-based methods for information delivery, they trial a software system. This suggestion creates excitement and many staff contribute their own ideas.

The team decides to use the current staff social media page as a base for all policy and procedure updates and reviews. Here they can also add links to other information resources that may be needed. Ultimately, this will create a library for all staff.

Zeta is extremely happy with the outcome. She notes that the team's decision to go digital will establish changes in their sustainable practices.

✎ Practice Task 5

1. List two software applications that could be used to format information materials.

    _____

    _____

2. What are three types of presentation methods that might suit a staff member who prefers to read about how things are done?

    _____

    _____

    _____

3. What are three types of presentation methods that might suit a staff member who prefers to talk about how things are done?

.

.

.

4. What are three types of presentation methods that might suit a staff member who prefers to do things to find out how they are done?

.

.

.

2C Finalising your materials

Once you have selected your presentation method and organised your layout, you will be able to receive feedback about details that can make the materials more attractive and refined.

A range of people might provide feedback as part of the proofreading and editing process.

Editing and proofreading

Editing and proofreading are vital components of finalising your presentation.

Editing is about making changes and suggestions that will improve the quality of the materials, the language used and the way the information is expressed. Proofreading includes some of these areas; however, editing is a more complex action and can extend to content analysis, identifying whether it contains up-to-date literature, is referenced appropriately, meets confidentiality and copyright laws, is informative and uses relevant wording.

Ask a range of colleagues to help with proofreading.

Editing might include:

> rephrasing jargon
> removing material that is not necessary to your message
> checking the spelling, punctuation and readability
> checking currency
> applying referencing and permission requirements
> correcting terminology
> defining content.

Proofreading might include checking:

> spelling
> grammar
> punctuation
> formatting
> alignment.

Often, people slip into relying on the computer spellchecker to finalise their document, and this can lead to errors.

To pick up spelling errors, difficult wording and inadequate grammar, you need someone who has skills in this area. At times, you may need to ask a range of colleagues for feedback so that you can make the most of the available proofreading abilities.

If stakeholders (in particular parents and prospective users of your service who the information is aimed at) pick up on spelling and grammar issues, this can be detrimental to the image and professional presentation of your service. Some information may even be misconstrued through spelling or grammar issues.

Final draft

A final draft will be created once you have undertaken all the necessary actions and completed the proofreading and editing process.

When a final draft has been made for a presentation or a document, it must again be viewed by others for final feedback regarding the content, as well as the presentation and format methods you have decided to use.

If this final step is not implemented prior to printing, emailing or presenting your final draft, stakeholders may identify errors, inconsistencies or unprofessional content. This may also result in the need to recall or redevelop the material, which can be time-consuming and costly, and presents a poor professional image.

Information approval

The information outlined in a final draft may need approval and validation from others before being published.

At times, this may be to sign off on the materials prior to them being published, while at other times stakeholders will expect you to make amendments to suit their requirements.

Your final draft may need approval.

This means you may need to source additional information from other avenues to ensure the content is valid, purposeful and meets their needs. Your supervisor, director or management committee may require evidence of where information has been sought from, clarification regarding its usefulness, and evidence of how it relates to frameworks and standards. Other stakeholders may wish to add their own elements or information they have sourced.

Regardless of how and where information is obtained and referenced, before moving forward and presenting or publishing any information, you must ensure you have appropriate approval from the necessary personnel.

Publishing

Be sure to budget carefully for publication costs and print runs.

If you have already decided on the publishing method, sustainability should have been taken into account. If your materials are not digital, think of the most cost-effective printing methods. To be cost-effective, you might:

> print a single copy of a poster and display it in a common area

> develop a specific number of brochures to cater for exact needs

> print enough copies for the duration of currency

> organise a larger print run for a similar or lower price.

Always publicise and promote the release of the new or updated material so that stakeholders know about it.

Example
Developing an information resource

Chase has been given the task of writing a draft for the promotion of an upcoming community event raising awareness of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). His target group is other staff members, families and the community.

He begins preparing his draft by sticking to the topic, establishing the content and ensuring his information is backed up by other resources, which he cites appropriately. He then proofreads the draft with the assistance of his educational leader.

After gaining approval as needed for parts of the information he is going to present, Chase works on his final draft using the feedback he has obtained. He focuses on any editing needed and formatting of the draft to capture his target audience. Chase includes clear, readable text boxes, symbols and images.

Once he has completed these adjustments, he again shows them to his educational leader for approval before publishing and printing the resource.

✎ Practice Task 6

1. Draw a line to match the beginning of each sentence about exploring and developing new information materials with stakeholders to the correct ending.

* When information is edited	* spellcheck on the computer should not be your only proofreading method.
* Information sourced from others	* the proofreading and editing process.
* A range of people might provide support for	* it will improve the quality of materials and language used.
* To pick up spelling errors	* may need approval before being used.

Summary

> It is important to gather and collate information on the extensive range of services, resources and support in your community, and to keep this information updated.

> You need to regularly access and review existing information sources to ensure they continue to meet individual and community needs.

> By routinely evaluating information, you may identify new information materials that need to be developed.

> Consultation with service users and stakeholders is a key part of the development process.

> To develop information materials, you need to use your basic project management skills, and follow guidelines for preparing, editing and publishing information.

> Once developed, information materials and systems need continuous improvement to ensure they remain current, relevant and accurate.

Learning Checkpoint 2
Developing information to meet requirements

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

Case study

Cleo is developing a new resource for families about nutrition and food choices. She wants to inform families about the importance of foods that are low in sugar and fat, as well as the potential danger to children with allergies in relation to foods that contain nuts and eggs.

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

   a. Cleo should review the service policy, the parent information handbook and other materials provided to parents prior to deciding what information she would need to source.   * Yes   * No

   b. Cleo should obtain information from the Department of Health website as the information here will include the existing information available to families, and will be current and reliable.   * Yes   * No

   c. Cleo is an educator, not a journalist. She should not bother proofing the material as parents will understand if the spelling and grammar are not perfect.   * Yes   * No

2. Draw a line to match each stakeholder with the example of how they can support Cleo to develop the information materials.

   * Colleague

   * Parent

   * Dietitian

   * Service cook

   * Identifying the details that are unclear and how they would like to receive information

   * Proofreading and editing

   * Menu details and issues experienced in the service

   * Nutrition advice

3. Which of the following formats would be most suited to sharing simple nutrition and food choice information with parents? Select all that apply.

☐   DVD

☐   Poster

☐   Email or social media

☐   Formal meeting

☐   Detailed report

Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

3A Evaluating adequacy of information

3B Implementing continuous improvement

Evaluating and maintaining quality information

In order to maintain an adequate range of quality information materials, it is essential that you evaluate these regularly and include them in your continuous improvement strategies.

This activity might be something you add to your quality improvement plan (QIP) under National Quality Standard (NQS) Quality area 7: Governance and leadership.

3A Evaluating adequacy of information

To maintain and improve existing information sources and materials, a continuous evaluation process needs to be established.

Not only is this a legal requirement, it also helps staff to undertake their job roles more effectively. Evaluation assists families and community members to understand the direction in which the service is heading.

Evaluation processes will cover specific criteria, steps or strategies to ensure current information resources remain valid, up to date and useful.

Evaluation helps you remain current in your understanding.

By regularly evaluating the information resources, you will be enabling those who use the resources to remain current in their understanding and practice. Information can quickly become outdated or superseded as trends occur and new learning theories develop.

The understanding others have in regard to the service's operation, goals and objectives are linked with information resources, and with the NQS.

Quality area 7 of the NQS: Governance and leadership, discusses the importance of effective administrative systems. These enable the effective management of a quality service. This quality area includes Element 7.1.2: Management systems, which is about ensuring systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.

In the *Guide to the National Quality Framework* (aspirelr.link/nqf-guide-pdf), the following aims are identified.

Efficient and effective systems	Effective information management systems support the educational leader, supervisors and educators in their planning, delivery and reflection on the educational program, and the development of strategies to continuously improve. When educators have adequate time and administrative support to perform their roles, they can focus on delivering a quality service to children and their families.
Confidentiality and records management	Services are required to safely store and maintain the confidentiality and currency of information provided by families, service staff and other stakeholders. This builds families' confidence in the service's record management practices, and is an indicator of the level of professionalism at the service.
Administrative systems	The approved provider must ensure there are adequate systems in place to maintain the effective, compliant operation of the service.

Complaints management	An effective complaints and grievance management system confirms to staff, families and the community that complaints and grievances are taken seriously and investigated promptly, fairly and thoroughly. Effective management of complaints may inform quality improvement processes, and is an efficient way of considering and acting on feedback from families.
Documented policies and procedures	The service should ensure that policies and procedures are well documented, maintained and easily accessible to staff members and families. This supports the service to implement practices that are based on the service's policies and procedures. Regularly reviewing policies and procedures in collaboration with families supports a shared understanding of the service's practices.

Evaluation criteria

It is useful to have a specific evaluation system in place.

When you follow set criteria, you can ensure that all areas will be reviewed, and that adequate time and involvement will be invested.

Criteria to consider during evaluation processes includes:

> credibility
> accuracy
> reliability
> relevance

> development date
> information source
> purpose and scope.

Some evaluation guidance can be gained from the NQS and related regulations. The *Guide to the National Quality Framework* gives advice on items that an assessor from the regulatory authority will be looking for, discussing and sighting as part of an audit.

Questions to ask yourself during evaluation processes

> Does the management of confidential information meet requirements?

> Do we have processes in place for reviewing and updating records and information on a regular basis?

> What is the policy in relation to retention and disposal of records?

> Are records accessible and kept for the required length of time?

> Is technology available for administration, planning, evaluation and communication purposes, including for communicating with families?

> Can we produce examples of internal communications, such as meeting minutes, distribution notices and staff bulletins?

> Are policies and procedures available to parents, families and staff?

> Are the policies and procedures up to date and accurate?

Example

Evaluating information

Alexia is determined to ensure all stakeholders are happy and have an understanding of the standards and practices set out by the service. She believes the best possible action is to evaluate all information resources and materials regularly to ensure they meet the needs of service users and staff.

Today, Alexia decides to start an evaluation process based legislative processes. She considers the management of confidential information by first reviewing the regulations and standards. She checks that the processes are in place for confidential records, including retention requirements, and then arranges for secure disposal of out-of-date documents.

✏️ Practice Task 7

1. Which of the following statements relate to evaluating existing information sources and materials? Select all that apply.

☐ By regularly evaluating the resources and sources of information, you will be enabling those who use these to remain current in their understanding and practice

☐ It is important to gather and collate paper-based information on the extensive range of services, resources and support in your community.

☐ Quality area 7 of the NQS: Governance and leadership, discusses the importance of effective administrative systems. These enable the effective management of a quality service.

☐ Consultation with service users and stakeholders is not useful when developing information materials.

☐ Evaluation processes will cover specific criteria, steps or strategies to ensure current information resources remain valid, up to date and useful.

3B Implementing continuous improvement

Continuous improvement is about having an ongoing and systematic approach toward improving products, services and processes.

Continuous improvement can motivate the review and evaluation of the service's information materials and systems. It will help to ensure your service's information materials remain current and accurate, and continue to meet the needs of the target group.

Element 7.2.1 of the NQS requires that in all services 'there is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place'. This standard is focused on a commitment to continuous improvement.
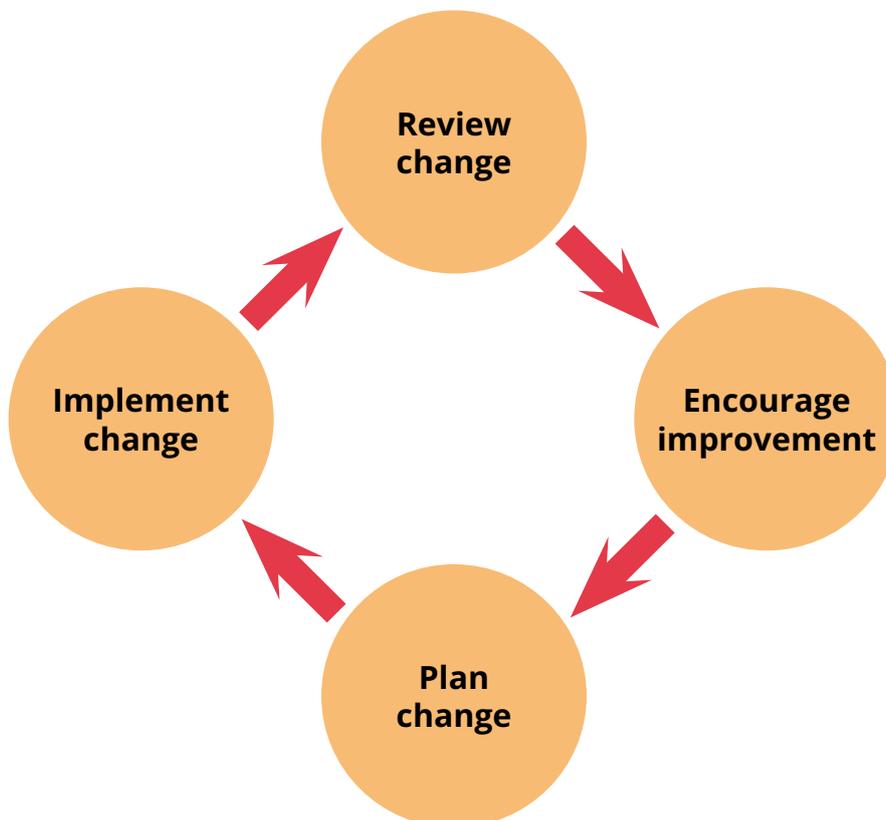

Each service needs to continuously improve.

The continuous improvement process

Continuous improvement can be applied to information materials and systems through a series of steps.

The following diagram illustrates the four stages of the continuous improvement process and the ongoing relationship they have with each other.

Steps for continuous improvement are outlined in the following table.

	Encourage improvement Encourage the team to look for ways to improve the information material and/or system. Consider the following: ➤ How can you provide information more efficiently? ➤ Is there any waste or redundancy? ➤ Is the information material or system achieving what you want it to? ➤ What would you have to do to improve the process of providing information? ➤ How can you ensure the change will be successful?
	Plan the change Plan to implement the change to the information material and/or system. Consider the following: ➤ What do you need to do to introduce the change? ➤ What resources do you need? ➤ How can you ensure everyone views the change positively? ➤ How will you measure the effect of the change?
	Implement the change Implement changes to improve the information material and/or system. Consider the following: ➤ How can you support the team when introducing change? ➤ How can you support other stakeholders such as parents when introducing the change?
	Review the change Review and monitor changes. Consider the following: ➤ Is the change improving performance? Why or why not? ➤ What can be improved?

Measuring continuous improvement

Measuring continuous improvement helps determine the effectiveness of the improvement process, and poses questions relating to how others understand the information.

It gives additional feedback relating to the proposed need for change, reflection or input of others.

The main points to consider when measuring continuous improvement are outlined below.

Assessment tools

- In education and care services, the assessment tool used is a quality improvement plan (QIP).
- Your QIP should include reference to information materials and resources, and their evaluation and maintenance.

Financial results

- Is the service meeting its budget?
- Are the appropriate and required practices in place?
- Is information being shared within the community to ensure the service is running to capacity?

Stakeholder responses

- Are stakeholders happy?
- Do they have the information they want and are they pleased with this information?
- Does the information ensure that things are happening as they should be?
- Are stakeholders aware of their responsibilities and the responsibilities of the service?

Example
Using continuous improvement processes

Jay wishes to build an information review process for his service's procedures.

He decides to use the four-stage continuous improvement process, which highlights the ongoing relationships between the stages. These include:

- encouraging improvement
- planning change
- implementing change
- reviewing change.

Jay adds each stage to his service's QIP and develops a policy around his review. He takes the following steps:

- Jay works with his team to sort out procedure documents. He finds paper copies of procedures that are current, and others that have been reviewed many times.
- Jay talks with the team and they develop a plan. They decide that as long as digital copies of past procedures exist, they can safely dispose of superseded procedures. They agree that only up-to-date procedures should be kept as paper copies.
- The team work together to check digital copies, set up a folder of procedures, and dispose of copies that are not required.
- At the next staff meeting, the team discusses the policy folder. All staff feel confident they are able to access the most current procedures and know they can look back at digital information if needed.

✏️ Practice Task 8

1. Number each step from 1 to 4 in the order of a continuous improvement process.

☐ Reviewing the change

☐ Implementing the change

☐ Planning the change

☐ Encouraging improvement

Summary

> To maintain and improve existing information sources and materials in your service, a continuous evaluation process needs to be established.

> Evaluation processes will cover specific criteria, steps and strategies to ensure current information resources remain valid, up to date and useful.

> Continuous improvement is about having an ongoing and systematic approach toward improvement of products, services and/or processes.

> It is useful to measure continuous improvement because this helps to determine the effectiveness of the improvement process.

Learning Checkpoint 3
Evaluating and maintaining quality information

1. Which of the following statements reflect the aims in the *Guide to the National Quality Framework* in relation to evaluating information? Select all that apply.

☐ When efficient and effective systems are implemented for evaluating information, it supports educators to perform their roles. They can focus on delivering current information.

☐ When records management respects confidentiality, this indicates the level of professionalism at the service.

☐ Administrative systems are not important to the provision of information or to policies and procedures, and do not assist with effective complaints management.

2. Draw a line to match each continuous improvement stage with the relevant question.

* Implementing the change   * How can you provide information more efficiently?

* Encouraging improvement   * What resources do you need?

* Reviewing the change   * How can you support others when introducing the change?

* Planning the change   * Is the change improving performance?