

Focus:

To explore how the team values, develops, and supports its workforce.

Key elements:

- Workforce skills, diversity, and support
- Use of lived experience, volunteers, peer leaders
- Organisational culture of inclusion and responsiveness.

General Guidance for Organisations

- Develop a living workforce strategy that addresses skills gaps, diversity, and well-being
- Link roles and development plans directly to your organisational mission and target outcomes
- Create formal mechanisms to include lived experience and community voice not just feedback but co-design
- Ensure inclusive recruitment and training practices are in place (e.g. inclusive job descriptions, interview panels, staff networks)
- Promote psychological safety, shared leadership, and reflective practice within teams.

Best Practice Examples

- Peer volunteers are supported into paid employment or leadership roles
- Written policy and approach to recruit, onboard, train, retain and reward volunteers
- · Regular forums for staff and community to share insights and influence planning
- Lived experience advisory group directly feeding into board decisions
- Organisation adopts Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) standards (e.g. Disability Confident, Race Equality Charter)
- Community co-designed framework applied across all service areas.



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PLAN		
Challenge: How do you identify and plan for future workforce needs?		
Unsatisfactory	 No systematic process for workforce planning The workforce needs are unclear or unassessed No future planning or succession is considered. 	
Satisfactory	 Some workforce needs identified Limited or informal planning for the future Gaps acknowledged but not systematically addressed. 	
Good	 The current workforce needs to be regularly assessed Future workforce planning is in place Workforce gaps identified and addressed through recruitment or training. 	
Very Good	 Workforce planning is data-informed and comprehensive Includes succession planning and talent management Anticipates changes due to external factors Engages staff in workforce planning processes. 	
Excellent	 Workforce planning is strategic, proactive, and agile Scenario planning and horizon scanning were used Plans address diversity, inclusion, and well-being Workforce capacity aligns with long-term organisational goals Planning is integrated with wider system workforce strategies (e.g., health, social care, education, SEND, and community partners). 	

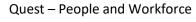
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Challenge: How do you ensure staff are skilled, confident, and able to deliver your programmes effectively?	
Unsatisfactory	 Little or no staff development or training Staff unclear about organisational purpose or priorities Low confidence or capability evident in delivering programmes.
Satisfactory	 Basic training and development provided Some communication of purpose to staff Staff skills meet minimum operational requirements.
Good	 Regular training and development opportunities Organisational purpose communicated and reinforced in practice Staff demonstrate competence, confidence, and reliability in programme delivery staff demonstrate confidence and competence in their roles.
Very Good	 Development plans are tailored to roles, skills gaps, and community needs Purpose embedded in induction and ongoing learning Staff feel motivated, engaged, and able to innovate in delivery.
Excellent	 Continuous professional development is across the organisation Staff are purpose-driven leaders, innovators, and advocates Learning is informed by insights and feedback from staff, communities, and partners, ensuring training meets evolving needs Staff skills exceed standards and adapt proactively to new challenges Qualifications and training meet or exceed national industry standards Staff are empowered to shape strategy, delivery innovation, and wider organisational culture.

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Challenge: Do you have an inclusive recruitment and onboarding process to attract and train new starters?		
Unsatisfactory	 No focus on inclusion or cultural competence The workforce lacks diversity and awareness Inclusive practice not embedded. 	
Satisfactory	 Basic policies on inclusion in place Some training or awareness raising provided Efforts to recruit a diverse workforce are limited. 	
Good	 Inclusive practice embedded in policies and procedures Workforce training includes cultural competence Diversity goals are set and monitored. 	
Very Good	 Inclusion and cultural competence are core organisational values Regular training, support, and evaluation Workforce diversity reflects the community served Inclusive leadership and accountability mechanisms exist. 	
Excellent	 The organisation is recognised as a leader in inclusion Diversity and cultural competence drive all workforce decisions Staff empowered to challenge exclusion Inclusive practice is continuously innovated and embedded Regular impact assessments on diversity and inclusion outcomes, with findings shared across the wider system. 	









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Challenge: How do you support wellbeing, retention, and satisfaction across your teams?			
Unsatisfactory	 No well-being support or retention strategies High turnover and low morale Staff satisfaction is not monitored. 		
Satisfactory	 Basic well-being initiatives exist Some effort to monitor staff satisfaction Retention issues acknowledged but not addressed. 		
Good	 Wellbeing programmes in place Staff satisfaction is regularly surveyed Retention strategies developed and applied. 		
Very Good	 Proactive, holistic wellbeing support Staff feedback actively shapes wellbeing initiatives Retention rates are stable or improving Recognition and retention programmes contribute to satisfaction. 		
Excellent	 Wellbeing is prioritised and fully integrated Staff thrive in a supportive culture Retention exceeds sector benchmarks Wellbeing innovations are shared system wide Wellbeing is linked to improved community outcomes. 		

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Challenge: How do you develop leadership capacity at all levels of the organisation?		
Unsatisfactory	 No structured approach to leadership development Leadership is limited to a few individuals at the top Staff lack opportunities to take on leadership roles. 	
Satisfactory	 Some ad hoc leadership development activities (e.g., occasional training) Opportunities exist but are not accessible to all staff Leadership development not linked to organisational priorities. 	
Good	 Clear leadership development pathways in place Staff supported to build leadership skills (e.g., mentoring, training) Emerging leaders given opportunities to take responsibility. 	
Very Good	 Leadership development is embedded in workforce planning A range of approaches used (coaching, peer learning, secondments, etc.) Leadership opportunities shared across roles and levels Development aligned to organisational strategy and future needs. 	
Excellent	 Leadership development is part of organisational culture Staff empowered to lead authentically and collaboratively Programmes support diverse and inclusive leadership pipelines Leadership learning is co-produced with staff and communities Organisation recognised as a sector leader in developing talent and leadership. 	

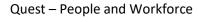
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MEASURE, MONITOR AND REVIEW		
Challenge: How do you review workforce performance and development needs?		
Unsatisfactory	 No formal performance review process Development needs not identified or addressed Poor accountability for workforce outcomes. 	
Satisfactory	 Some performance reviews conducted Development needs are identified, but follow-up is inconsistent Accountability is limited. 	
Good	 Regular, structured performance reviews Development plans agreed and monitored Clear accountability mechanisms. 	
Very Good	 Reviews are developmental and supportive Data from reviews informs workforce planning Staff actively participate in development discussions Performance linked to organisational goals. 	
Excellent	 Performance management is continuous and embedded Development needs are anticipated and proactively met Reviews include peer and 360-degree feedback Workforce development drives organisational improvement High levels of accountability and transparency. 	

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Challenge: How does your workforce strategy contribute to improved outcomes for people and communities?		
Satisfactory	 Workforce strategy exists but alignment to community outcomes is partial Some evidence that staff skills and deployment support local needs Contribution to improved outcomes is inconsistent or limited in scope. 	
Good	 Workforce strategy clearly aligns with organisational purpose and local priorities Staff deployment and development support measurable improvements in services Evidence shows that workforce efforts contribute positively to community outcomes. 	
Very Good	 Workforce strategy is integrated with organisational and system priorities Staff skills, roles, and development plans are explicitly designed to improve outcomes Impact on people and communities is demonstrable and regularly reviewed Staff engagement drives innovation and enhances service effectiveness. 	
Excellent	 Workforce strategy drives transformational outcomes for individuals, communities (including SEND, disability, and underrepresented groups), and systems Staff are empowered as leaders and co-creators in achieving community impact Evidence shows clear links between workforce planning, development, and improved wellbeing Strategy is dynamic, anticipates future workforce and community needs, and informs wider system improvements. 	

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