

# Leadership Qualities Framework

## Self-assessment tool for strategic manager or leader/ strategic commissioner

Care Workforce Pathway role category:

Senior leaders, nominated individuals,  
directors, CEOs

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Name:

Job title:

Organisation:



# Self assessment of confidence and ability key

Use this self-assessment tool to spot areas for growth and set your own development goals.

Rate yourself against the principles using this key:

## Good

I do this on a regular basis and feel confident in my ability. No further development or training needed.

## Adequate

I do this on a less frequent basis and feel less confident in my ability. Refresher training and additional development and practice would be beneficial.

## Needs refreshing

I previously felt confident in this but it is not something I have done recently or regularly. Further development and refresher needed.

## New to me

I have never considered or been required to cover this area. Training and development required.



# Creating the vision

How would you rate yourself against these principles?	Good	Adequate	Needs refreshing	New to me
Lead the co-creation of a future-focused, person-centred vision with stakeholders				
Align organisational vision, strategy and investment with long-term priorities				
Embed core values into policies, plans and everyday practice				
Communicate the vision clearly and consistently to inspire commitment				
Promote and model the organisation's values and inclusive, compassionate culture				
Build strong partnerships across the system with commissioners and practitioners				
Ensure services are holistic and inclusive, meeting physical, mental, emotional and social needs				
Monitor organisational performance to uphold high standards of service delivery				
Actively share learning across teams and services				
Encourage openness, responsibility and constructive feedback at all levels				
Support a culture of continuous improvement through collaboration and reflection				
Act as a visible role model for values-led leadership and strategic clarity				

Vision and values set out where your service is heading and why the work matters. They're not slogans — they're a shared purpose that shapes decisions, behaviour and culture. As a strategic manager, you need to make sure the vision speaks to every part of the service, inspires people and guides long-term direction. Your values show people how to behave with one another, help build a collaborative culture and create opportunities for everyone to get involved.

**Here are some development areas and resources to help you build your skills in this area:**

### **1. Collaborative, distributed leadership**

Review and reflect on your work with partners, experts, commissioners, managers and your community.

- How do you use listening, sharing, adapting and refining to build a shared vision and achieve real collaboration and impact?
- Do you actively empower others and build trust to distribute leadership?

### **2. Inclusive, compassionate leadership**

- Research models and best practice approaches to compassionate, inclusive leadership.
- [Read the blog](#) 'What makes compassionate leadership a game changer'.
- Reflect on how you and your team model inclusion, identify bias, and address it with integrity.

### **3. Build partnerships with influence**

[Read](#) about Skills for Care's strategic partnerships.

### **4. Reflect on your leadership style**

- How do you role model compassionate, inclusive leadership in your role as a strategic leader?
- How do you know you've effectively co-created and communicated a future-focused, inclusive, person-centred vision?
- What blind spots do you need to check with stakeholders to strengthen your strategic vision?

### **5. Try the 'Positive culture toolkit for adult social care' activities for creating the vision**

- SAY Activity 1 - Our culture in three words and Activity 3 - Define our values
- SEE Activity 1 and 2 - Our articulated workplace culture walk and Activity 3 - Communicating values case study

[Explore the toolkit](#)

# Setting direction

How would you rate yourself against these principles?	Good	Adequate	Needs refreshing	New to me
Use evidence, trend analysis and sector insights to anticipate future challenges and opportunities				
Use data and information to evaluate and share the potential of options to implement the vision				
Foster co-production with people with lived experience, advocates and stakeholders				
Engage actively with commissioners, partners and the wider system to shape joined-up solutions				
Combine organisational and system-wide knowledge to set long-term direction				
Collaborate transparently with external partners to build trust and shared purpose				
Drive innovation and sustainable change using digital tools, data sharing, and improved work processes				
Communicate clearly and inclusively, using person-centred leadership approaches				
Share the vision and progress regularly with teams, wider stakeholders, and those drawing on care and support				
Advocate for the organisation using evidence, influence, and negotiation to shape business opportunities, policy and reform				
Lead a values-driven, evidence-based culture of accountability, governance and excellence				
Monitor performance, assess impact, and adjust direction to meet organisational values and vision				
Evaluate diversity impacts, challenge non-inclusive behaviours, and apply lessons learned to future planning				

## Leadership Qualities Framework

Self assessment tool for strategic manager or leader

Turning a high-level vision into real, system-wide impact takes both strategic thinking and strong relationships. As a strategic manager, your role is about stewardship — setting direction, anticipating challenges and opportunities, and using your influence to guide the organisation forward.

**Here are some development areas and resources to help you build your skills in this area:**

### 1. Use data to strategically analyse and set future direction

- Reflect on how your organisation handles ‘grey area’ dilemmas where two values may conflict, such as delivering quickly versus ensuring full inclusion.
- Investigate how to enhance the organisations ability to quantify social value and long-term savings, not just immediate costs.
- Use data to strategically focus on what will make the biggest difference across the system.

### 2. Understand how to be a ‘policy taker’ v ‘policy shaper’

Combine data with human stories to make your vision meaningful for all audiences, from board members to people who use your service.

### 3. Drive sustainable change and innovation using digital tools

Research best-practice approaches for using digital tools to modernise existing processes and identify genuine digital innovation in service delivery.

### 4. Reflect on your behaviour when advocating for the organisation in order to negotiate, share opportunities and bring about policy reform

Reflect on a time when you weren’t as successful as you hoped in advocating for the organisation or driving policy or system change.

- What was the situation?
- What did you do or say?
- What did not work as well?
- What was the outcome and what have you learnt from this experience?

### 5. Try the ‘Positive culture toolkit for adult social care’ activities for setting direction

- SAY Activity 2 - Our vision for the future
- FEEL Activity 1 - Planning to listen

[Explore the toolkit](#)

# Managing services

How would you rate yourself against these principles?	Good	Adequate	Needs refreshing	New to me
Be proud to lead the organisation to deliver safe, effective, person-centred care at scale				
Ensure all services meet or exceed legal, regulatory and quality standards				
Oversee long-term resource and investment, aligned to service priorities				
Champion workforce planning and talent development to sustain service quality and leadership capacity				
Ensure emergency preparedness and sustainability across financial, staffing and environmental domains				
Drive system-wide collaboration to maintain high-quality, integrated services				
Create structures that enable staff empowerment and teamwork				
Promote open decision-making while constructively managing conflict with diverse perspectives				
Build strong partnerships with commissioners, providers and community stakeholders based on trust and accountability				
Unite teams and communities around a shared vision and purpose				
Embed a culture of high performance, accountability and continuous improvement				
Advocate for respect, inclusion, equality and allyship, representing the organisation's values				

## Leadership Qualities Framework

Self assessment tool for strategic manager or leader

As a strategic leader, you need to develop high-level leadership skills that go beyond day-to-day management and into true strategic stewardship. These goals usually centre on balancing immediate operational pressure with long-term systemic health.

Here are some development areas and resources to help you build your skills in this area:

### 1. Quality improvement

Review your quality improvement systems and methodologies.

- Do they ensure services can continuously improve and meet the needs of the people they serve across the wider system?
- How is data used to predict gaps?
- Do they comply with regulatory and inspection fundamental standards and the Health and Social Care Act?

You could:

- attend CQC seminars
- explore [Skills for Care's Good and Outstanding care guide](#)
- build EDIMS knowledge.

### 2. Financial literacy to build the business case and workforce planning

Attend training and build expertise in using financial metrics to build business cases for change, including workforce planning to meet changing operational and strategic need.

- What is workforce planning and why is it important?

Explore [workforce planning tools](#).

### 3. Mastering the art of influence

- Build skills in conflict management when introducing new ways of working.
- Research how to influence a unique workforce (e.g. multi generational).
- Build your distributed leadership skills by using coaching and mentoring to delegate decision-making, not just tasks.

### 4. Reflect on your behaviour as a strategic leader when managing the service effectively

- How do you get the right balance between strategic oversight and operational awareness?
- When have you become 'too operational' and what do you need to put in place to ensure you remain strategic?

### 5. Try the 'Positive culture toolkit for adult social care' activities for managing services

- EXPECT Activity 2 - Policy and procedure review and Activity 3 - Including staff in setting workplace expectations
- DECIDE Activity 1 - Challenge or accept and Activity 3 - Challenging behaviour

[Explore the toolkit](#)

# Improving services

How would you rate yourself against these principles?	Good	Adequate	Needs refreshing	New to me
Monitor performance, ensuring lessons are learned and applied organisation-wide				
Remove barriers to improvement and uphold accountability for better outcomes				
Use innovation to maintain high care standards and drive best practice				
Invest in technology, infrastructure, and workforce skills to enable lasting change				
Promote ethical digital transformation with fair access and regulatory compliance				
Create learning opportunities and support mentoring and coaching across the organisation				
Collaborate to evaluate services, identify improvements and share innovative solutions				
Anticipate future challenges and share opportunities to proactively prepare teams				
Ensure all improvements are co-produced, evidence-based and aligned with strategic goals				

Curious leaders open up possibilities for others — encouraging new ideas, wider thinking and fresh solutions. As a strategic manager, you play a key role in improving services by normalising uncertainty, being authentic, spotting hidden risks early and showing empathy while staying focused on delivery.

**Here are some development areas and resources to help you build your skills in this area:**

### 1. Lessons learnt

- Review processes and systems across the organisation to support lessons learnt.
- Ensure you have a clear understanding of how to evidence to CQC when things go wrong.
- Research and develop skills in how to formulate and manage a quality improvement plan.

### 2. Innovation for the current century and beyond

Research ways to promote innovation across systems, networks, and services, including building capability and confidence in digital innovation. Take a look at:

- [Leading Change, Improving Care](#)
- [Digital technology in social care](#)

### 3. Coaching, mentoring and co-production

- Develop coaching and mentoring skills
- [See how to make co-production a reality](#)

### 4. Reflect on your behaviour when you are supporting teams to develop a curious, accountability, learning mindset

Working with your managers and leaders, ask the following questions and reflect on what their responses tell you about your role as a strategic leader.

- What are you learning at the moment?
- Where do you feel stuck?
- What support would make the biggest difference?
- What's worrying people most about this?
- What might we be underestimating?"
- How is this landing with different teams?
- What worked better than expected?
- What would we repeat next time?
- What almost tripped us up?

### 5. Try the 'Positive culture toolkit for adult social care' activities for improving services:

- ANALYSE Activity 3 - Influences on workplace culture
- EXPECT Activity 1 - Sharing success
- DO Activity 1 - Our lived culture walk and Activity 3 - Managing and inspiring positive behaviour
- FEEL Activity 3 - Self assess

[Explore the toolkit](#)

# Delivering the strategy

How would you rate yourself against these principles?	Good	Adequate	Needs refreshing	New to me
Understand the culture, history, environment and politics, and their impact, to carefully steer the strategy				
Be accountable for delivering the strategy with compassion and integrity				
Drive strategic change by inspiring others and aligning services around person-centred care				
Share progress and celebrate the success of the strategy with all stakeholders to build momentum				
Reinforce key messages consistently to keep everyone informed and engaged				
Lead effective collaboration with internal and external partners for greater impact				
Build strong networks across health and social care to support joined-up solutions				
Foster a culture of transparency, curiosity and inclusive teamwork				
Create and promote a caring, collaborative environment built on trust				

As a strategic manager, developing these leadership skills means shifting from simply ‘managing tasks’ to truly ‘navigating systems’. Because this work is rooted in strategic leadership and organisational dynamics, growth often comes from building psychological safety, strengthening political awareness and mastering communication.

Here are some development areas and resources to help you build your skills in this area:

### 1. Building a sustainable, positive culture and a well-led, inspired workforce

- Use the [Positive culture toolkit for adult social care](#) to assess how effectively your culture supports people and motivates staff.
- Support employers to be well-led. Explore the [Good and Outstanding care inspection toolkit](#).

### 2. Celebrate, promote and market your success

- Reflect on what systems you have in place to identify and celebrate success internally and externally. How could these be improved?
- Explore how others market their success and what messages resonate most with commissioners and stakeholders.
- Inspire leaders to deliver a service of excellence that shows how your services are outstanding.
- [Find out more about delivering Outstanding care.](#)

### 3. Developing your network

Research best practice in [workforce development](#) and create a workforce strategy that reflects your service needs.

- Research and undertake coaching and mentoring in how to network more effectively to build your links and become noticed.
- Join networking forums and groups to help you deliver a strategy shaped by the wider system.

### 4. Reflect on your behaviour when navigating the wider system and strategically networking

- What networking skills and capabilities do you have and do you need to develop further?
- Think of a time when you have effectively built networks and partnerships – what worked and what can you learn from this experience?
- Think of a time when your lack of effective networks impacted on service delivery – what prevented you from building more effective networks and what can you learn from this experience?

### 5. Try the ‘Positive culture toolkit for adult social care’ activities for delivering the strategy

- DO Activity 2 - You are making a difference
- FEEL Activity 4 - Listening to feedback to create positive change

[Explore the toolkit](#)