skillsforcare

A positive culture toolkit
for adult social care

Contents

An introduction to the positive workplace culture toolkit

Workplace culture is **the character and personality of your workplace and what makes your workplace unique, special and individual**.

Positive cultures take time to build and conscious effort to maintain. Using this toolkit will support you at different stages of your workplace culture journey to establish, maintain and improve your workplace culture so that it's **inclusive, compassionate and collaborative**.

No matter what size of employer, this toolkit will help explain what a positive workplace culture is and how you can develop, maintain, and where needed, change an existing culture.

Having a positive **inclusive** workplace culture enables employers to both attract and retain a diverse workforce of great staff, and to invest in those who will deliver the best care and support to others.

Culture directly impacts on the quality of care within an organisation, and this is why the Care Quality Commission (CQC) ↗ focuses on culture within their inspection framework as a key factor of Well-led. This toolkit supports employers to understand, analyse, define, and evidence their existing culture, review its effectiveness, and put plans in place to improve different aspects in line with the CQC five key questions and quality statements.

The toolkit is centred on practical activities you can use in your workplace with staff and people who draw on care and support, to ensure everyone is involved in developing a positive workplace culture. It showcases services who have established and improved their culture as a priority. These services have achieved good and outstanding ratings in recognition of their positive workplace culture and help to inspire other services to reflect on and improve their culture.

Find out more information about what the CQC will want your service to evidence ↗.

Shared direction and culture

The culture of your service will need to be shaped around the needs of the people you support and the wider community.

This film ↗ provides a summary of this area of inspection. It can help you and your teams learn about what will be inspected and what is important to demonstrate to deliver good or outstanding care.

[▷]
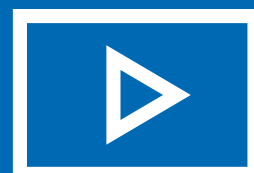
About the positive workplace toolkit

Why should you use the toolkit?

This toolkit will enable you to build and improve your workplace culture so that it is a positive, compassionate, collaborative, and inclusive environment for people to work at, and where people drawing on care and support experience high quality care.

It will not change overnight, but grow and flourish as your organisation develops its knowledge and skills in this area.

Who is the toolkit for?

This toolkit is for anyone responsible for the culture, management and leadership in adult social care workplaces of all sizes, including Individual Employers, Registered Managers, CEOs, area leads, or Nominated Iindividuals, and those with leadership and management responsibility. Others might find it useful, for example commissioners or those monitoring

What does the toolkit include?

The toolkit is structured into sections to enable you to first understand what a positive workplace culture is using the Culture Iceberg model

We provide you with checklists and resources to enable you to analyse and identify actions to improve your workplace culture.

We focus specifically on three areas of a positive workplace culture which have been shown to have the greatest impact on the quality of care and services and on innovation and improvement: inclusion, compassion and collaboration and share examples of how to develop compassionate, collaborative and inclusive cultures for wellbeing for all.

The final section of the toolkit looks at how to challenge and change an existing unhealthy/inappropriate/unhelpful culture. You're supported throughout with practical activities and resources.

How and **when** should you use the toolkit?

This toolkit is a flexible resource that can be used alongside your business and workforce plan. This will ensure that any identified areas for development and improvement can be worked on at a pace that works for you. You may want to focus on one section of the toolkit first and then plan additional work at a later date.

The toolkit takes you through each element of the culture iceberg model, providing you with practical activities that you can use to involve your staff and those who draw on care and support in analysing, developing and improving your culture. You should use these activities once you have identified which element of the culture toolkit you need to focus on, and build these in to your time with staff and those who draw on care and support. The activities are listed as we go through each element of the iceberg model, and can be found as separate, downloadable sheets for you to print off and use.

Setting up a new team or service - use the toolkit to engage with your managers, staff, and people who draw on care and support in defining and developing a positive inclusive culture for your workplace.

Identifying areas for further improvement - you have a good workplace culture and want to identify areas to improve further and evidence your successes, or you are aware of improvements needed to your workplace culture. Use the toolkit to engage with your staff, and those who draw on care and support to analyse and review your culture and its impact on others.
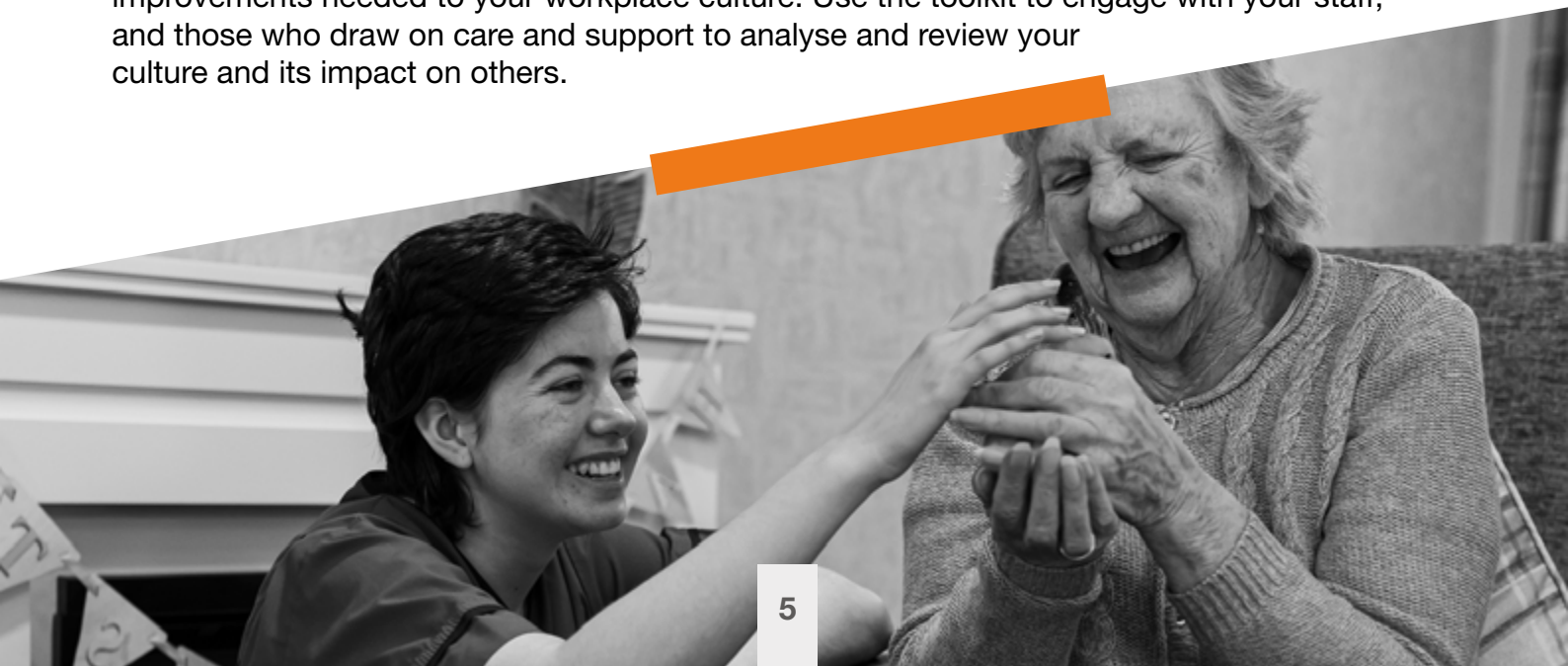
The toolkit uses the **Analyse - Plan - Do - Review** model to evidence that you are a service that is learning, improving, and innovating.

Analyse

Review

Plan

Do

"
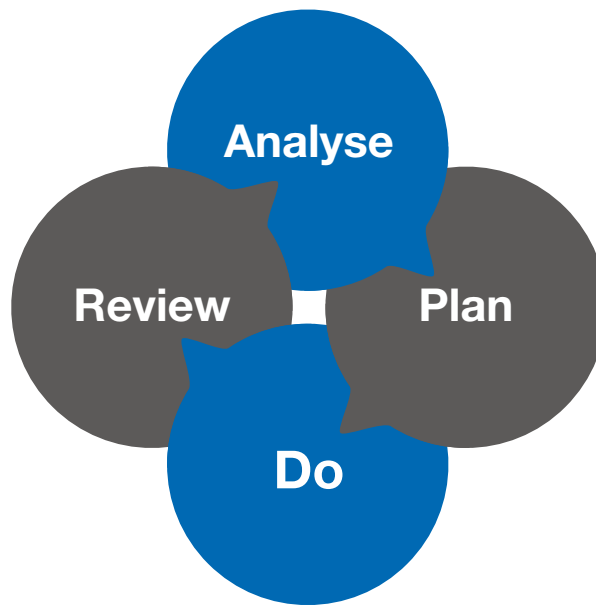
We go in and we have a very honest and open audit of every aspect of the service. Very much a 'no stone unturned' approach. Because you need to know what you are playing with in order to prioritise. I start with the audit, and we do look at everything. That audit then informs my service improvement plan. That improvement plan then informs my action plan. Those are my three steps: audit, improvement plan, action plan…

Ronnie Lillywhite

If you are setting up a new team or service:

Say

What does the organisation say that its culture is? This can be communicated through its vision and purpose, its values, and its strategy.

Analyse: Before the service or team starts.
Plan - do: Before the service or team starts
Review: After 12 months

See

How does the organisation present its vision, values, and culture in visible symbols such as the physical environment, its internal and external communications and its branding?

Analyse: Before the service or team starts.
Plan - do: Before the service or team starts.
Review: After 12 months

Expect

How does the organisation expect people to behave and how does it share those expectations through the organisation's policies, procedures and codes of conduct?

Analyse: Before the service or team starts.
Plan - do: Before the service or team starts.
Review: After 12 months

Do

What are the behavioural norms in the organisation? How do people behave then no-one is watching, and they are not told what to do?
Analyse: After 3 months, 6 months and 12 months
Plan - do: After 3 months, 6 months and 12 months
Review: After 12 months

Feel

How and what do staff, those who receive care and support, families and other stakeholders think, feel, assume, and believe about the organisation? Does it do what it says it does?

Analyse: After 3 months, 6 months and 12 months
Plan - do: After 3 months, 6 months and 12 months
Review: After 12 months

Decide

How does the organisation live its culture and values when things are challenging? What do people prioritise or ignore? What is measured and rewarded?

Analyse: After 6 months and 12 months
Plan - do: After 6 months and 12 months
Review: After 12 months

Existing service looking to improve further:

Say

What does the organisation say that its culture is? This can be communicated through its vision and purpose, its values, and its strategy.

Analyse: Review current vision, values and strategy – Month 1
Plan - do: If areas for improvement identified, prioritise for next 2 months
Review: After 12 months

See

How does the organisation present its vision, values, and culture in visible symbols such as the physical environment, its internal and external communications and its branding?

Analyse: Do culture walk – Month 1
Plan - do: If areas for improvement identified, prioritise for next 2 months
Review: After 12 months

Expect

How does the organisation expect people to behave and how does it share those expectations through the organisation's policies, procedures and codes of conduct?

Analyse: Review key policies and procedures – month 2
Plan - do: If areas for improvement identified, schedule changes and improvements over next 6 months
Review: After 12 months

Do

What are the behavioural norms in the organisation? How do people behave then no-one is watching, and they are not told what to do?

Analyse: Do culture behaviours walk – month 3 - 4
Plan - do: If areas for improvement identified, prioritise changes and improvements over next 6-12 months
Review: After 12 months

Feel

How and what do staff, those who receive care and support, families and other stakeholders think, feel, assume, and believe about the organisation? Does it do what it says it does?

Analyse: Do listening groups with staff and service users – month 4-6
Plan - do: If find areas for improvement, identify immediate, quick wins and schedule longer term improvements over next 6 - 12 months
Review: After 12 months

Decide

How does the organisation live its culture and values when things are challenging? What do people prioritise or ignore? What is measured and rewarded?

Analyse: Review in practice examples – month 6 - 7
Plan - do: If find areas for improvement, identify immediate changes, quick wins and schedule longer term improvements over next 6 - 12 months
Review: After 12 months

What is a positive workplace culture?

Workplace culture is **the relationships, the character and personality of your workplace and what makes your workplace unique**. It is made up of the shared characteristics of the people in your workplace and includes **values, traditions, and ways of doing things, beliefs, interactions, behaviours, workplace norms, and attitudes**.

The CQC guidance "Right support, right care, right culture" (2022) focusses on defining the right culture for supporting people with a learning disability and autistic people, but their definition could be applied to any adult social care workplace:

> **"The ethos, values, attitudes and behaviours of leaders and care staff ensures people using services lead confident, inclusive and empowered lives."** (CQC, 2022)

Care Quality Commission

Here are ways in which others have defined workplace culture:

Culture is a set of living relationships working towards a shared goal. It is not something you are, it's something you do.

Daniel Coyle, The Culture Code

The culture of an organisation is the feeling it gives, the atmosphere it creates, how it's perceived both internally and externally.

Newkey

A positive workplace culture is where staff are engaged within the organisation, they feel involved and emotionally connected; they invest in their role and the organisation to support the goals and values of the organisation. They enjoy coming to work!

Amber Trust

A positive workplace culture in adult social care is a culture that is **inclusive, compassionate and collaborative**:

An **inclusive workplace culture** is a culture where everyone feels valued, accepted, supported and has a sense of belonging regardless of their background, identity or circumstance.

"We think that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion must be embedded and mainstreamed as the responsibility of all regardless of role, and especially leaders and managers from front line to board. This must include the practice of zero tolerance of discrimination, but also greater awareness of the realities in the workplace for those with protected characteristics."

Sir Gordon Messenger June 2022, Health and social care review, for a Collaborative and Inclusive Future

A **compassionate workplace culture** is a supportive and inclusive environment for its workforce, creating a blame free and creative place to work, valuing the wellbeing of those who work within it, as well as those drawing on care and support.

"compassionate leadership is attending to those we lead, being present with them, listening with fascination, understanding the challenges they face, empathising with them, particularly given the level of stress and work demands in social care, and then helping them. In the context of compassionate leadership helping means helping those we lead to do their jobs more effectively by helping to remove the obstacles that get in the way"

Michael West, 2022

A **collaborative workplace culture** is a culture where everyone works together, solving problems and taking shared responsibility for the success of the organisation as a whole and for the delivery of quality care and support.

"when I first started out as a registered manager, I remember that I was just finding all of these tasks that I needed to do, I was reinventing the wheel every single time. Then it dawned on me, actually there's someone down the road like two minutes, in one of our other services that's probably experienced this problem before that was a really good resource to help with something or have developed something themselves with that with the support that actually would be ideal."

Mark Topps, Co-Founder and Director, Essex Cares Limited

Inclusion and compassion links extensively to employee satisfaction, creativity and reduced absenteeism, meaning that employees and employers stand to gain by being more inclusive and compassionate. To do this, organisations need to take targeted action as part of their strategies, recognising that inclusion is relevant to everyone. Research suggests that there are five areas where action needs to be taken:

1. employee behaviour

2. line manager capability

3. senior leadership

4. policies and wider people management practices

5. organisational culture, climate and values.

It's more than simply 'including' diversity – it's about individual experience and work, and creating a positive environment in which everyone can influence, share knowledge and have their perspectives valued.

Tapping into all employees' knowledge and perspectives can only help make better decisions and understand their service users – both of which are vital for your organisation to continue to thrive and innovate into the future.

Lets look at the culture iceburg model.

* Adapted from The Cultural Iceberg Model, Edward.T.Hall (1976)
and The Cultural Webb, G.Johnson and K.Scholes (1992).

The Culture Iceberg model

The Culture Iceberg model* in this toolkit has been adapted from existing models of culture to support those working in adult social care workplaces in analysing, developing, and maintaining a positive workplace culture, and to provide ideas and approaches that you can apply to your workplace.

What we:

Say

See

Expect

The articulated culture

What we:

Do

Feel

Decide

The lived culture

Say

Vision and purpose

Values Strategy

See

Environment brand identity

Communication symbols and signs

Expect

Policies

Standards

Codes of conduct

Behaviour

Do

Behavioural norms "What happens when no-one is watching"

Decide

Challenge/Accept

Reward/Measure

Prioritise/Ignore

Feel

Beliefs and assumptions

Reputation

Stories

Feedback

Employee and client engagement

The Culture Iceberg is made up of six different components of culture. Some aspects of your workplace culture are what you describe your culture as, your **articulated culture**, and are shown as being above the water line, as they are what you want others to **see** your culture as.

But for your culture to be embedded, your **articulated culture** must be underpinned by components of a lived culture which is shown every day in what people **do or don't do**, and in what behaviour is accepted and challenged. On the diagram, these are shown below the water line as they underpin your culture.

When your **articulated culture** and your **lived culture** are aligned, your workplace culture is embedded in your workplace – What you **say** matches what people **do**.

Articulated culture **+** Lived culture **=** A positive workplace culture

Your **articulated culture** includes what you:

- **Say -** What do you say that your culture is? This may be communicated through your vision and purpose, your values, and your strategy. Have you developed your vision and purpose inclusively involving others?

- **See -** How do you present your vision, values, and culture in visible symbols such as the working environment, and in your internal and external communications? Do your staff see inclusion throughout your organisation?

- **Expect -** How do you expect people to behave and how do you share those expectations through your policies, procedures, and codes of conduct and are these inclusive?

Your lived culture includes what you:

- **Do -** What are the behavioural norms in your workplace? How do people behave when no-one is watching? How inclusive are those behaviours?

- **Feel -** How and what do staff, people drawing on care and support, families and other stakeholders think, feel, assume, and experience of your culture? Is it inclusive and how is this communicated and felt by them?

- **Decide -** How does your culture and values support you in making decisions when things are challenging? Are decisions inclusive and is everyone aware of the decision? What do you prioritise or ignore? What is measured and rewarded?

Later in the toolkit we'll also explore open and closed cultures and how to challenge and change a closed culture which CQC defines as **"a poor culture that can lead to harm, including human rights breaches such as abuse. In these services, people are more likely to be at risk of deliberate or unintentional harm"**.

How CQC identifies and responds to closed cultures - Care Quality Commission

Features of a positive workplace culture

A culture of inclusion

A culture of collaboration

Positive workplace culture

A culture of compassion

A positive workplace culture is well-led, compassionate, collaborative, and inclusive. It has effective, compassionate leadership at every level of your organisation, supported by collaborative, inclusive teams and clear policies and procedures.

> **"Effective leadership creates successful teams, and successful teams drive better outcomes… a well led, motivated, valued, collaborative, resilient workforce is 'the key' to better patient and health and care outcomes."**
>
> Health and Social Care Review - Leadership for a collaborative and inclusive future, 2022 ↗

Compassionate leadership is inclusive in ensuring that the voices of all are heard in the process of delivering and improving care.

Positive inclusion must exist in every team not simply as an organisational aspiration, but in order to ensure that differences are all voices are valued, thus stimulating psychological safety, trust and engagement.

Caring to Change. Sir Michael West, The Kings Fund, 2017

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, Building Inclusive Workplace Report describes an inclusive workplace culture as

"An inclusive workplace culture allows all people to thrive at work, regardless of their background, identity or circumstances.

Focussing on diversity alone could even be counterproductive as it doesn't address the systemic challenges to workplace equality and inclusion such as workplace culture. Instead put underrepresented groups, or less 'powerful' groups in harm's way, potentially doing more harm than good."

Building inclusive workplaces | CIPD

"The most successful teams are also those which foster leadership and accountability at every level, and where everyone is encouraged to be an agent of something bigger than themselves."

The Messenger Review, 2022

Your leaders contribute to a positive workplace culture by:

- Developing and communicating a clear vision, ambitious goals and clear outcomes that encourage collaboration and sharing across teams.
- Role modelling positive behaviours in line with your vision, values and workplace culture.
- Adopting an inclusive and compassionate leadership style, adapting their approach to meet the needs of different staff groups and individuals.
- Being open to and encouraging of colleagues speaking truthfully.

> **Leaders inside and outside of healthcare are turning their attention to creating 'speak up cultures'. However... they overestimate the extent to which others are speaking up as well as their own skills in listening up.**
>
> Speaking truth to power: why leaders cannot hear what they need to hear - Megan Reitz and John Higgins, BMJ

Your staff teams contribute to a positive workplace culture by:

- Communicating and collaborating in an open and inclusive way.
- Creating a climate of psychological safety and compassion for all members of the team to express themselves, ask questions, share ideas and admit mistakes without fear of judgement.

There are seven key dimensions of inclusion: fair treatment, integrating differences, decision-making, psychological safety, trust, belonging, and diversity (HBR research)

Often we can think that because we have diversity that we are inclusive, and that there is equity for all. However, one does not automatically follow the other.

How to Measure Inclusion in the Workplace ↗

Your policies and procedures contribute to a positive workplace culture by:

- Linking clearly to your workplace vision and values so your staff understand why your policies and procedures are in place.
- Setting clear expectations of behaviour that is **compassionate**, **collaborative**, and **inclusive** and is in line with your workplace culture.
- Emphasising the importance of compliance with your policies and procedures and their role in putting the workplace culture into practice.

The work that you undertake on culture creates the evidence needed for your CQC inspection. The five domains of the CQC Single Assessment Framework enable services to understand what the **outcomes** of a positive workplace culture are.

A positive workplace culture creates organisations who are:

- safe
- effective
- caring
- responsive
- well-led.

Our review of CQC inspections found that Good and Outstanding rated services had a well-led culture that is **compassionate**, **collaborative**, **inclusive** and **open**.

Read more in our 'Inspection toolkit'

> **The way that I do it is that I have something called 'an outstanding folder' or my 'wins' folders, and anything that I ever see in our service that I consider to be a win or evidence of outstanding practise we write a one-pager on it. The important thing is we don't, unlike other homes, pre-specify where we think that that sits within the Key questions.**
>
> Sanjay Dhrona, Managing Director, The Close Care Home.

> **If you haven't got something that you feel is your biggest strength; identify it, put things into action, so that you've got a path of how you are looking to achieve that.**
>
> Karyn Ross, Shared Lives Coventry

Activities to support you in analysing and making the case for investing in your workplace culture

These activities are helpful for use as a leadership team when you begin to think about and analyse your workplace culture, decide when to start work on your culture and know why it is important to you.

You could use these activities in leadership or staff meetings or on a team away day:

Activity one - What is a workplace culture? ⬇

Activity two - A business case for culture: the importance of a positive workplace culture ⬇

Activity three - Influences in your workplace culture ⬇

Activity four - Different types of cultures and SWOT analysis ⬇

Saying what your culture is - developing your articulated culture

Articulated culture
Say
See
Expect

+

Lived culture

=

A positive workplace culture

1. Say - Develop a shared vision, strategy and workplace values

What we:
Say
See
Expect

The articulated culture

What we:
Do
Feel
Decide

The lived culture

Developing, communicating and regularly reviewing your vision, strategy and culture enables you to demonstrate evidence on one of the CQC quality statement for well-led, so what does the CQC well-led statement need?

"

We have a shared vision, strategy and culture that is based on transparency, equity, equality, human rights, diversity and inclusion, engagement and understanding challenges and the needs of people and our communities in order to meet these.

CQC – well-led

> **We want people to feel proud of us as their employer and about themselves and the things they achieve in their role. By nurturing a positive workplace, we aim to achieve this**
>
> New Key

Human rights underpins the CQC strategy and is the basis of our values for serving the social care sector. When we consider an individual's rights it places them at the heart of decision making and enables us to consider person-centred care. It enables us to view the person rather than labels, whether it is supporting our staff and teams, or people who draw on care and support. Acknowledging and supporting their rights to be looked after, to contribute as valued members of society and to enjoy their lives.

The starting point for establishing a positive, inclusive workplace culture is for your leaders to work with staff, those you provide care and services to, families and other stakeholders to develop a clear, inclusive, person-centred, ambitious vision.

Developing your vision collaboratively, gives people a sense of a shared purpose, identity, belonging and inclusion. It enables everyone to feel proud of being part of your workplace, and this can impact positively on staff engagement, staff wellbeing, and staff retention. The starting point for establishing a positive, inclusive workplace culture is for your leaders to work with staff, those you provide care and services to, families and other stakeholders to develop a clear, inclusive, person-centred, ambitious vision.

For more information on human rights visit Equality and Human Rights Commission ↗

Vision	→	Values	→	Expected behaviours	→	Policies, procedures and standards
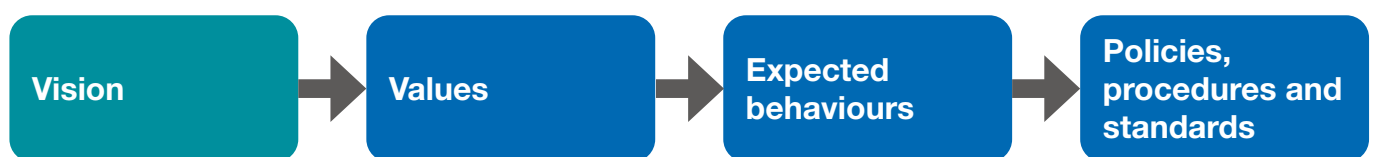
Your **vision** should be translated into a credible **strategy** for your service that is challenging, realistic, achievable, supported by clearly defined objectives that demonstrate how you will deliver the best quality care to those you support.

Your vision and strategy are in turn underpinned by a set of workplace **values** which reflect the things that are most important to your staff and the people you provide care and support to.

| Vision | → | Values | → | Expected behaviours | → | Policies, procedures and standards |
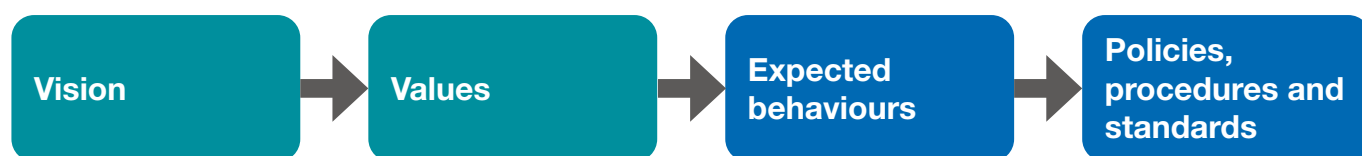
Every inclusive workplace should cultivate the conditions for individuals to overcome entrenched and often unacknowledged disadvantage by positive equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) action which would be led by a shared vision for EDI including:

Positive equality, diversity and inclusion action

- Embed inclusive leadership practice as the responsibility of all leaders.
- Commit to promoting equal opportunity and fairness standards.
- More stringently enforced existing measures to improve equal opportunities and fairness.

For more information, visit Leadership for a collaborative and inclusive future - GOV.UK ↗

Your values, like your vision, should be developed in a **collaborative** and **inclusive** way, involving staff, those you care for and support and other stakeholders, reflecting the values that are most important to them.

Everyone is entitled to their own values and beliefs and each organisation needs to be able to define theirs. Have a set of values that underpin the way we work and provide care and support to individuals and families.

Seven social care values

1. Respect for the individual
2. Maintaining confidentiality
3. Empowering and promoting independence
4. Preserving the dignity of individuals
5. Effective communication that displays empathy and warmth
6. Safeguarding and a duty of care
7. Promoting anti-discriminatory practice

Values are what people feel – culture is what people do. Organisational culture and values will affect every area of the service.

Creating a positive workplace culture is essential if a service is to deliver high-quality care and support. The values that the organisation embraces should be communicated clearly so that staff understand what is expected of them and know what they need to do.

The Social Care Act, 2014 sets out six core human right principles for social care. These principles help guide the way we behave within our work and how we work with others.

The Care Act 2014 six principles are

1. **Empowerment -** Personalisation and the presumption of person-led decisions and informed consent.

2. **Prevention -** It is better to take action before harm occurs.

3. **Proportionality -** Proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.

4. **Protection -** Support and representation for those in greatest need.

5. **Partnership -** Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.

6. **Accountability -** Accountability and transparency in safeguarding practice.

| Vision | → | Values | → | Expected behaviours | → | Policies, procedures and standards |
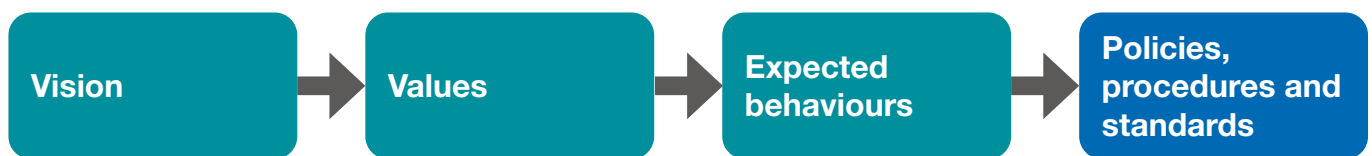
Defining and instilling the behavioural expectations can happen in three further steps:

■ **Create behavioural themes:** Create the 6-8 behavioural themes, which should support the organization's strategy and apply to all employees across the organization.

■ **Derive concrete behaviours:** Define 3-5 concrete behaviours for each theme. These should be actions that can be easily observed by peers, team members and direct managers.

■ **Define behavioural expectations:** For each behaviour, one should be able to articulate what 'great' looks like, as well as meeting expectations and falling short. Consequently, all elements of the talent ecosystem should be based on these same expectations for each job level.

There should be clearly defined behaviours aligned to each value which inform all colleagues (from frontline staff to leaders and managers) what you expect of them in terms of their behaviour at work with each other and with those drawing on care and support.

| Vision | → | Values | → | Expected behaviours | → | Policies, procedures and standards |
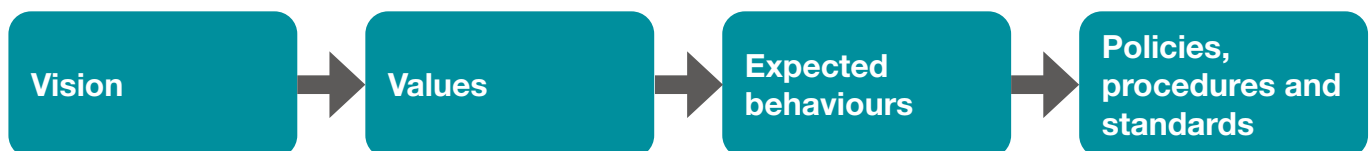
Finally, designing policies and procedures that enable everyone to perform to their best capability. Ensuring that they are clearly articulated, that they are compassionate, collaborative and inclusive of all of your workforce, families, people you care for and those you care about.

Activities and resources to support you in developing your vision, strategy, and workplace values

Here are some activities and resources to enable you to analyse how effectively you have developed your workplace vision and values, plan areas for improvement and know what to do to put those plans in place.
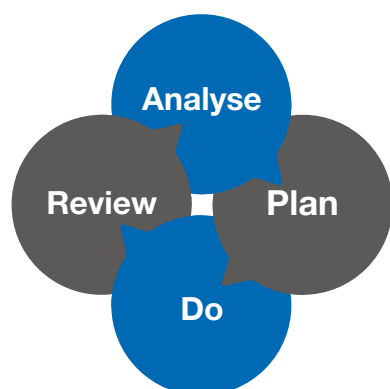
Analyse: How effectively have you developed your workplace vision and values?

Developing a positive workplace culture checklist ⬇ - **Say**

Plan – Do: Plan what you need to do

Developing a positive workplace culture – implementation action plan ⬇

Activity one - Our culture in three words ⬇

Activity two - Our visions for the future – developing a shared vision with staff ⬇

Activity three - Mapping our values – developing person-centred values World café ⬇

**Supporting resources**

- Values based recruitment ↗
- Leadership Qualities Framework ↗
- A practical guide for strategic workforce shaping, commissioning and planning ↗

Review: Review what you've done

Developing a positive workplace culture – implementation monitoring template ⬇

2. See - Communicate your culture, vision and values for all to see

What we:
Say
See
Expect

The articulated culture

What we:
Do
Feel
Decide

The lived culture
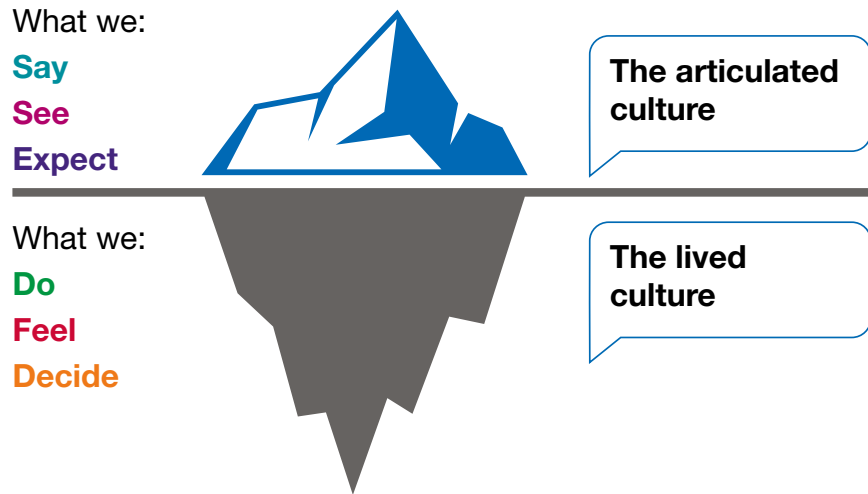
A positive workplace culture starts with a vision or mission statement for your organisation, and a set of aims and objectives. They give your organisation, and everyone within it, a shared purpose.

This is important because it gives everyone a feeling of belonging and unity. This can ensure your workforce and people who access care and support are loyal and proud to be part of your organisation.

It also makes people feel part of a team which encourages them to be tolerant and respectful of each other's views, strengths and differences, and recognise the contributions and skills that everyone brings.

It's important for staff to understand your core purpose, the ethos of your work and your commitment to being **an inclusive**, **compassionate**, **collaborative** workplace so that it is lived and breathed every day in the way they work. For those drawing on care and support, it's important to let them know what they should expect when experiencing great care and support.

You can communicate your culture, vision, and values in many practical ways. Here are some things for you to consider.

In your workplace environment

Does your work environment reflect and display your vision and values?

For example, if you have a culture and values of **dignity and compassion**, does your workplace have space for staff to spend time listening to people drawing on care and support, families and carers to get to know them and their needs?

If you have a culture and values around **taking pride in the quality of care**, does the work environment encourage staff to give people their full attention and help people when they need it.

24

On your website and in digital and external communications

Do messages about your vision and values underpin all your external branding and communication? For example:

- Are your values easily accessible and visible on your website, in your building, on your contracts?

- Do you share stories from those who have benefitted from your services that demonstrate your values and vision in practice?

- Is the language you use on your website and in social media inclusive, using the same language you use in your vision and values?

In your recruitment process

Do you share your vision and values with potential staff through values-based recruitment? For example:

- Do your recruitment packs share your vision and values with real examples of how staff contribute towards them in their role?

- Are your recruitment messages **inclusive** of different groups and do they promote your commitment to EDI?

- Do you give potential staff an opportunity to experience your workplace culture and values through open days and involving people with lived experience in recruitment?

## In your internal communications with staff

Do you communicate your vision and values to existing staff when setting standards and expectations or celebrating success? For example:

- Do your newsletters or awards celebrate your staff who have demonstrated your workplace values and vision using their unique characteristics and have made a positive impact on others' lives?

- Do you underpin your vision and values regularly in staff briefings? We have more information about supervision on our website.

Activities and resources to support you in communicating your culture, vision and values

Here are some activities and resources to enable you to analyse how effectively you communicate your workplace culture, vision and values, plan areas for improvement and know what to do to put those plans in place.
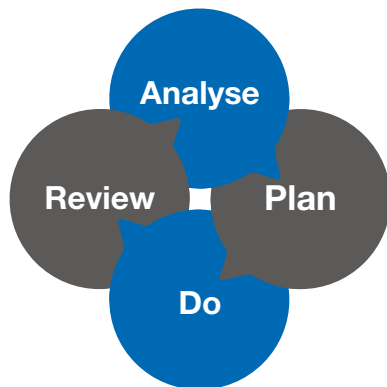
Analyse: How effectively do you communicate your culture, vision and values?

Developing a positive workplace culture checklist 🔽 - **See**

Plan – Do: Plan what you need to do

Developing a positive workplace culture – implementation action plan 🔽

Activity one - Our articulated workplace culture walk 🔽

Activity two - The workplace culture mystery shop 🔽

Activity three - Case study: Communicating our values and culture 🔽

Supporting resources

- Values based recruitment ↗
- How Registered Managers Networks can support managers to lead change ↗
- Guide to improvement ↗

Review: Review what you've done

Developing a positive workplace culture – implementation monitoring template 🔽

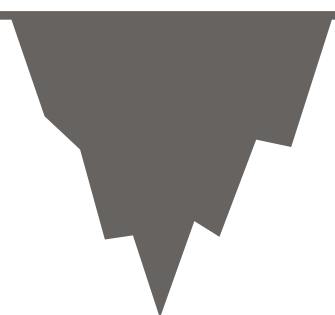# 3. Expect - Set clear standards and expectations of behaviour and conduct

What we:
Say
See
Expect

The articulated culture

What we:
Do
Feel
Decide

The lived culture

To ensure staff know how to put your vision and values into practice in their work, it is important to set clear expectations of workplace conduct and behaviour that is **inclusive**, **compassionate** and **collaborative** in line with your vision and values.

Once you have developed your expected behaviours, they should be translated to specific policies, procedures and codes of practice to help your staff to know how to behave in specific work situations to create a positive, inclusive workplace culture.

Where to set standards and expectations?

Organisations can define and set standards and expectations of behaviour and conduct by developing:

- A staff values and behaviours framework.
- An inclusive, compassionate and collaborative focussed code of conduct for staff.
- Person-centred care plans focussed on the values and behaviours staff should display when delivering person-centred care.
- Job descriptions, person specifications and role profiles including values and behaviours.
- Embedding expectations of behaviours in specific policies and procedures which could include amongst others:
    - dignity and respect at work
    - person-centred care
    - attendance
    - conduct and capability
    - safeguarding
    - equality, diversity and human rights
    - information sharing.

When to set standards and expectations?

You should set expectations of behaviour and conduct at every stage of the employment journey, shown by our PRISIM model.

The stages are:
- planning to recruit new staff
- recruiting, assessing and vetting new staff
- inducting new staff and managing them in their probation
- supervising, developing and managing staff
- identifying concerns and managing performance
- managing staff exits.

This was developed and has been introduced to employers as part of the recently published partner project Better Hiring toolkit ⤴

Activities and resources to set clear standards and expectations of behaviour and conduct

Here are some activities and resources to enable you to analyse how effectively you set standards and expectations for staff around their behaviour and conduct, plan areas for improvement and know what to do to put those plans in place.
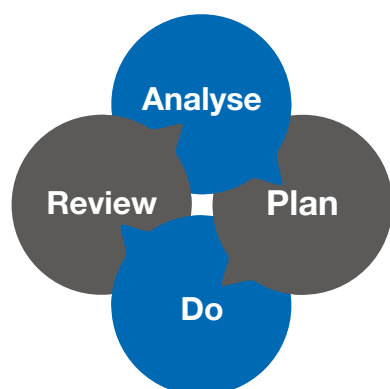
Analyse: How effectively do you set standards and expectations?

Developing a positive workplace culture checklist - **Expect**

Plan – Do: Plan what you need to do

Developing a positive workplace culture – implementation action plan

Activity one - Sharing our success stories - identifying positive behaviours

Activity two - Our policy and procedure culture review – Setting expectations

Activity three - Case study: Involving staff in setting workplace expectations

Supporting resources

- Values based recruitment
- Kindness, compassion and dignity – GO online guide
- Effective supervision guide – setting and managing expectations and conduct in supervision
- People Performance Management Toolkit
- The Better Hiring Toolkit

Review: Review what you've done

Developing a positive workplace culture – implementation monitoring template

Moving from saying to doing – embedding your lived culture

Articulated culture

+

Lived culture

Do

Feel

Decide

=

A positive workplace culture

You are what you do, not what you say you will do.

Carl Jung

4. Do - Notice how people do what they do when they put your culture into action every day

What we:
Say
See
Expect

The articulated culture

What we:
Do
Feel
Decide

The lived culture

You know you have a lived, embedded workplace culture when everyone in your workplace puts your vision, values and behaviours into practice every day.

It's remembering the values that you came into the sector with, and why you enjoyed working in social care. If you don't agree with something challenge it or stand up for what you believe in.

Mark Topps, Co-Founder and Director, Essex Cares Limited

How your leaders lead the culture, how your teams embrace the culture and how your staff each align their personal values and behaviours to your workplace values and culture, all determine whether you have a lived, embedded culture or not.

Your leaders supported by all staff, have a key role in noticing, challenging and inspiring how people behave and what they do in line with your culture and values by:

- **Role modelling** positive, **inclusive behaviours** in line with your values and workplace culture. Your leaders set the tone for what is expected behaviour from staff. If a leader does not follow policies or procedures, or regularly shows behaviours that are not **inclusive**, **compassionate** or **collaborative**, this behaviour will set the lived culture in their team.

- Adopting an **inclusive leadership** style, adapting their approach to meet the needs of different individuals and teams. This means they take time to understand the different personalities, qualities, characteristics, needs and personal circumstances of their staff to ensure staff understand what is expected of them and how they can meet those expectations in a way that meets their individual needs and circumstances.

- Encouraging an open, **collaborative team culture** with leadership at all levels, where staff support each other in meeting expected standards and call out and share concerns where there are team members who need support or who are not behaving in line with your culture and expectations.

- Encouraging a **compassionate learning team culture** where staff feel psychologically safe to make and admit mistakes without judgement, experience psychological safety knowing they are supported by leaders in particular to learn from those mistakes and improve their practice.

- Using a **compassionate leadership approach** to supervision and one to ones, noticing and understanding not just what staff are doing but how they are doing it and identifying any areas in which staff may be struggling and need support to improve their wellbeing and performance.

Supporting resource

Caring to Change (The Kings Fund 2017), Sir Michael West's report into compassionate leadership

31

Activities and resources to support you in noticing how people do what they do so that they put your culture into action every day

Here are some activities and resources to enable you to analyse how people are behaving in line with your articulated culture, plan areas for improvement and know what to do to put those plans in place.
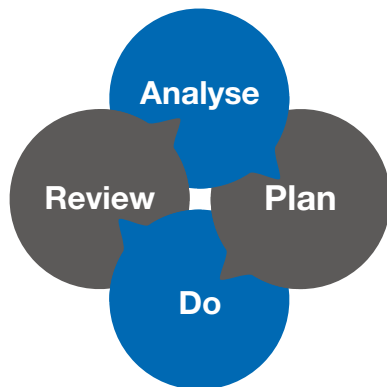
Analyse: How effectively do staff behave in line with your culture and values and leaders notice staff behaviour?

Developing a positive workplace culture checklist ⬇ - **Do**

Plan – Do: Plan what you need to do

Developing a positive workplace culture – implementation action plan ⬇

Activity one - Our lived culture walk – noticing what staff do ⬇

Activity two - You are M.A.D. - celebrating and identifying where staff are making a difference ⬇

Activity three - Managing and inspiring positive behaviours policy review ⬇

Supporting resources

- Supervision ↗
- People Performance Management Toolkit ↗
- Equality and diversity and confident with difference ↗

Review: Review what you've done

Developing a positive workplace culture – implementation monitoring template ⬇

5. Feel - Listen to and learn from other's feedback, experiences and ideas about your culture

What we:
Say
See
Expect

The articulated culture

What we:
Do
Feel
Decide

The lived culture

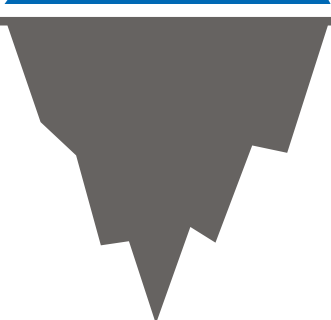Being **inclusive**, **collaborative**, **open to listening** to understand others lived experience and **responding to** their feedback is a core part of a positive workplace culture. It ensures that everyone feels included and has a voice, and that their views are listened to and valued.

It's only through listening to your staff and those you provide care and support to that you will know whether your vision and values are being translated into behaviour, and therefore whether your culture is being **lived** and is having a positive impact.

"

I see my role as empowering people; so empowering the residents to say when somethings not right, to say if they want something different in the home, for staff to actually adapt how we do things in the home and question me as a manager. It's about valuing each individual, because we've all got something to contribute and that even though we've got different responsibilities actually as human beings we're all equal and so we should all have a say in the home.

Debbie Dry, registered manager of Windsor Lodge, Buckinghamshire

Good and outstanding organisations make time to understand the needs and experiences of both those they provide care and support to, and their staff. They prioritise caring for staff wellbeing as they know this enables them to retain great people who are then motivated to provide great care and support.

When staff feel they are well-led, and are treated with care, respect and compassion, those they provide care and support to report being treated with respect, care and compassion as well.

Dawson et al 2011

CQC expects workplaces to have an open culture in which services are developed and improved in collaboration with staff, those they care for and support, families, and the community. They're particularly concerned to look out for closed cultures where:

> **"Families are often cut out of conversations about their family members care, this also extends to a general defensiveness from services on any questioning. A defensive culture prevents a learning culture."**
> (How CQC identifies and responds to closed cultures. May 2022)

Care Quality Commission

You can gather, listen to and learn from others feedback in different ways, including:

- Regular surveys focussed on different aspects of your culture and services.
- Listening groups providing regular opportunities for others to share their lived experiences and raise concerns.
- Informal conversations when working alongside of staff and with those you provide care and support to.
- Suggestion and ideas schemes encouraging others to come up with solutions to challenges and new initiatives.
- Staff network groups representing different staff groups, focussed on your understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and the lived experiences of inclusion in your culture.
- Formal conversations with staff in appraisals and supervision.
- The use of policies for sharing information and concerns including whistleblowing, allegations, and low-level concerns policies.

Activities and resources to support you in listening to and learning from other's feedback, experiences and ideas about your culture

Here are some activities and resources to enable you to analyse how effectively you are listening to and learning from other's feedback and ideas, plan areas for improvement and know what to do to put those plans in place.
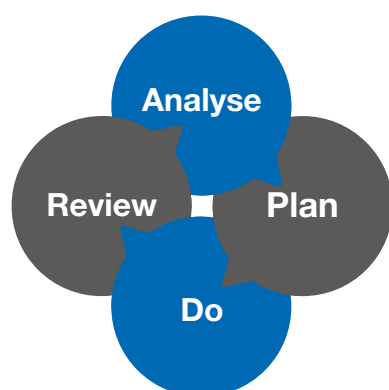
Analyse: How effectively do you listen to and learn from others feedback and experiences of your culture?

Developing a positive workplace culture checklist ⬇ - **Feel**

Plan – Do: Plan what you need to do

Developing a positive workplace culture – implementation action plan ⬇

Activity one - Planning to listen – planning to involve everyone in sharing ideas and feedback ⬇

Activity two - Myth busting – challenging assumptions and creating a positive view of your workplace culture ⬇

Activity three - Self assessment tool for the culture of your organisation ⬇

Activity four - Case study: listening to feedback to create positive change ⬇

Review: Review what you've done

Developing a positive workplace culture – implementation monitoring template ⬇

6. Decide - Reinforce and reward positive behaviour and challenge behaviour not in line with your culture

What we:
Say
See
Expect

The articulated culture

What we:
Do
Feel
Decide

The lived culture

In a positive, **inclusive** workplace culture, your leaders have a key role in **recognising and celebrating** behaviours aligned to your culture and challenging behaviour that is not aligned with your **inclusive** culture and values.

> **There's a saying in the military that if you see something below standard and do nothing, then you've set a new standard.**
>
> Ben Horowitz – 'What you do is who you are:
> How to create your business culture'

If your leaders and staff do not challenge others when they are not meeting your expectations of positive, inclusive workplace behaviour, the act of ignoring this behaviour creates a new accepted behavioural norm. You are setting a new standard for behaviour that is not in line with what you say your culture is.

For example, if you say you have a culture and values of **respect and inclusion**, but some leaders or staff show a lack of respect or inclusiveness to colleagues or anyone in the workplace and this is **not challenged**, **the non-inclusive behaviour becomes an accepted behavioural norm** which others may then copy.

"

What leaders focus on, talk about, pay attention to, reward and seek to influence tells those in the organisation what the leadership values and therefore, what they as organisation members should value."

Michael West et al. – 'Caring to change'

You can reinforce positive behaviours and a positive workplace culture by:

- empowering leaders and staff to challenge behaviour that is not in line with your workplace values and culture or is discriminatory and non-inclusive, providing clear policies and training in how to respond to any concerns

- recognising and rewarding individuals for demonstrating behaviour and actions that reinforce your workplace culture and values

- measuring how staff show your organisation's values and contribute to achieving your vision

- prioritising your limited resources and time on things that contribute to and make a positive impact on your culture, and which will deliver **compassionate**, **collaborative**, **inclusive**, **positive outcomes**.

Activities and resources to reinforce and reward positive behaviour and challenge behaviour not in line with your culture

Analyse

Review ■ Plan

Do
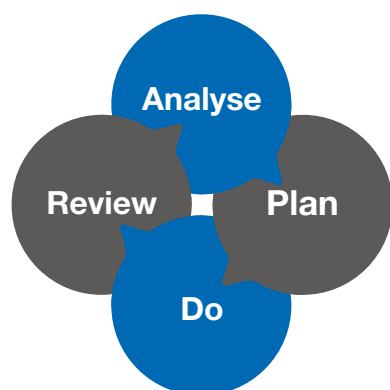
Analyse: How effectively do you reinforce, reward and challenge behaviour in line with your culture and values?

Developing a Positive Workplace Culture Checklist ⬇ – **Decide**

Plan – Do: Plan what you need to do

Developing a positive workplace culture – implementation action plan ⬇

Activity one - Challenge or Accept? ⬇

Activity two - Recognise-Reward-Measure ⬇

Activity three - Case study – Challenging behaviour. ⬇

Supporting resources

- ■ Resource - Skills for Care Supervision guide ↗
- ■ People Performance Management Toolkit ↗

Review: Review what you've done

Developing a positive workplace culture – implementation monitoring template ⬇

Develop and embed a compassionate, collaborative, inclusive workplace culture

A culture of inclusion

A culture of collaboration

Positive workplace culture

A culture of compassion

Say

Vision and purpose

Values Strategy

See

Environment brand identity

Communication symbols and signs

Expect

Policies

Standards

Codes of conduct

Behaviour

Do

Behavioural norms "What happens when no-one is watching"

Feel

Beliefs and assumptions

Reputation

Stories

Feedback

Employee and client engagement

Decide

Challenge/Accept

Reward/Measure

Prioritise/Ignore

One area of inspection the Care Quality Commission (CQC) focus on is 'Well-led'. They have defined three quality statements relating to **a positive culture of compassion**, **collaboration**, and **inclusion**:

CQC Well Led Quality Statement: Capable, compassionate and inclusive leaders
We have inclusive leaders at all levels who understand the context in which we deliver care, treatment and support and embody the culture and values of their workforce and organisation. They have the skills, knowledge, experience and credibility to lead effectively and do so with integrity, openness and honesty.

CQC Well Led Quality Statement: Partnerships and communities
We understand our duty to collaborate and work in partnership, so our services work seamlessly for people. We share information and learning with partners and collaborate for improvement.

CQC Well Led Quality Statement: Workforce equality, diversity and inclusion
We value diversity in our workforce. We work towards an inclusive and fair culture by improving equality and equity for people who work with us.

Example action plan for developing and embedding a culture of compassion and wellbeing

Say

- Involve staff in developing your workplace vision so they feel connected to and understand the value and purpose of their work.

- Have a workforce value which reflects your commitment to compassion and wellbeing of staff as well as service users.

- Proactively engage with diversity network leads.

- Build wellbeing into your strategic plans by having clear and manageable tasks, considering staff workload and wellbeing.

- Commitment to adopting a human rights based approach.

See

- Ensure information about the importance of staff diversity and inclusion, wellbeing and where to get support is accessible and visible across the workplace – e.g., posters, noticeboards and online.

- Review and redevelop your workplace environments to ensure it is compassionate to the wellbeing of staff e.g., break areas, wellbeing resources.

- Regularly focus on wellbeing messages in internal communications and team meetings. Promote your wellbeing culture to candidates during recruitment.

- Create effective ways for staff and families to provide feedback.

Expect

- Support staff wellbeing, compassion to others and self-care by creating policies such as:
  - Wellbeing
  - ED&I development
  - Compassionate and other leave
  - Attendance
  - Codes of conduct and ways of working.

- Induct and train staff on how to show compassionate care to others and themselves.

- Induct and train managers on compassionate leadership and wellbeing management skills.

Do

- Work with your managers to identify ways they can care for their own wellbeing and role model that to their staff.

- Encourage staff to bring their authentic self in to one to ones and supervisions.

- Organise sessions with staff to talk about their wellbeing.

- Develop a cultural and wellbeing activity calendar with staff involving different wellbeing activities focussed on multiple cultures.

Feel

- Do a specific wellbeing survey and set up a staff equality and wellbeing group to analyse the findings and identify possible actions for senior leaders.

- Train staff in mental health first aid to ensure everyone can support each other.

- Introduce peer supervision and provide opportunities in meetings for staff to share how they are feeling and to support each other.

- Share stories of lived experience and provide open conversation spaces to develop shared understanding.

Decide

- Introduce wellbeing and compassion into staff awards and celebrations of success.

- Review your business objectives/personal objectives and ensure they include measures of compassion and wellbeing.

- Train managers on how to have compassionate, conversations with staff around wellbeing and include how managers challenge and support staff wellbeing in management supervisions.

- Include supportive ED&I and allyship training as core development.

Wellbeing Case studies and resources

Skills for Care have [resources to support organisations in developing and improving their Wellbeing Culture](). You can also find out more about a local wellbeing offer by contacting your Locality Manager.

[Skills for Care Wellbeing stories]()

Examples action plan for developing and embedding a culture of collaboration

Say

- Involve those you provide care and support to, families, the community and partner organisations in developing and reviewing your workplace vision so they feel connected to what you do and understand the value and purpose of your work.

- Have a workforce value which reflects your commitment to collaboration within your workplace and teams, with service users, families, and partner organisations.

- Build collaboration into your strategic plans by creating opportunities, time and resources for collaborative team working.

- Assess your collaboration for its inclusivity, ensuring representation of all communities within the discussions.

See

- Promote teamworking opportunities and ways of working in images and language ("We" not "you") to attract people who are collaborative and enjoy working in teams.

- Review and redevelop your workplace environment and work rotas to ensure people have the time, space, and opportunity to work collaboratively.

- Invest in digital tools such as Teams and other sharing platforms to encourage staff to work collaboratively when they are not in the same physical location.

- Representatives from the communities discussed including staff, people they support.

Expect

- Include collaborative working behaviours in relevant policies such as codes of conduct and information sharing.

- Induct and train staff on how to work collaboratively and inclusively, including how to ask for help and support others.

- Induct and train managers on skills around collaborative and systems leadership so they have the skills and knowledge to encourage others to work collaboratively internally and externally.

- Ensure invitations for collaboration are openly and fairly administered.

Do

- Give opportunities for leaders to work with other leaders and staff in different teams, to build up their understanding of what all teams do.

- Build discussions around being collaborative and working effectively with others into supervision and appraisals.

- Invest time in social opportunities for staff to spend time together getting to know each other both inside and if appropriate outside of work.

Feel

- Introduce 360 feedback for managers, enabling them to hear feedback from those they work with and for, as well as those they manage about how collaborative they are and where they can improve.

- Carry out regular surveys or listening groups with people who you support and care for, families and external partners, focussed on how effectively you involve and work in partnership with them to identify areas for improvement.

- Build self-reflection into staff's preparation for supervision and their ongoing development to encourage them to reflect on how they work with and impact on others.

Decide

- Review your organisational objectives for the year – do they encourage collective or individual action from staff?

- Reward and recognise staff who work collaboratively by having team of the month awards rather than employee of the month awards.

- Train staff and managers in how to raise and respond to concerns around staff who are working in silo and not adequately sharing information with colleagues or those they care for and support.

Example action plan for developing and embedding a culture of inclusion

Say

- Involve all staff and others in developing your workplace 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion' vision and your commitment to EDI.

- Develop workforce values which reflect your commitment to EDI such as inclusion, respect and equity. Emphasise that EDI is the responsibility of everyone, not just leaders.

- Build EDI into your strategic plans by continually asking yourself how your actions remove systemic barriers to inclusion for everyone in your workplace.

- Clearly communicate why EDI data is collected and what action will be taken off the back of it.

See

- Review your internal and external communications through an inclusion lens – who are you deliberately including and targeting with your messages, and who are you unintentionally excluding and not representing?

- Review and redevelop your workplace environment so that it meets the diverse needs of and promotes belonging for different groups of people.

- Create an annual celebration calendar of events that have meaning to diverse staff groups and put in place plans to hold regular celebrations.

- Run focus groups or employee feedback sessions

- Analyse existing workforce data to uncover barriers to inclusion. E.G., compare promotion rates between demographic groups.

- Ensure there are multiple ways to provide feedback – make sure there is an offline method if employees don't have access to work devices.

Expect

- Develop clear behaviours aligned with your commitment to EDI and values so that staff know what you expect of them when they are being respectful, inclusive, and equitable. Induct and train staff on how to demonstrate these behaviours in their work.

- Embed your commitment to EDI and the aligned behaviours into relevant policies such as your HR, recruitment and training and talent development policies.

- Train all your managers on Inclusive Leadership to enable them to build an inclusive culture in their teams.

- Use gathered EDI data to guide action, identifying the barriers to inclusion in your organisation, and how they can be tackled.

Do

- Create a bespoke survey to collect inclusion data to measure perceptions of inclusion at multiple levels

- Use appraisals and supervision to hold staff to account for their behaviour in line with the workplace commitment to EDI.

- Build time into recruitment, supervision, and day-to-day management time for leaders to get to know staff as diverse individuals and understand their needs.

- Give new staff a mentor as part of their induction who can enable them to understand what they need to do on a day-to-day basis to put your values and behaviours into practice.

Feel

- Create opportunities and time for all staff to come together in psychologically safe spaces and talk without judgement about their lived experiences in your workplace, such as in staff network groups.

- Carry out an EDI specific staff survey designed in partnership with staff and include staff in analysing the feedback and identifying actions and solutions.

- Set up listening groups with those you provide care and support to and their families to understand their lived experience of belonging and inclusion when working with your staff.

Decide

- Commit to a zero-tolerance policy on any form of discrimination or harassment and set up ways for staff to raise concerns knowing they will be responded to and taken seriously.

- Train managers in how to challenge discrimination and inequitable treatment in the workplace, and support managers in putting it into practice.

Changing existing cultures

After **analysing** your workplace culture, you may have identified specific areas, teams, or groups within your workplace where you want to change the culture so that it is more positive and more in line with your workplace vision and values.

Subcultures

You might have subcultures in your workplace between different groups or staff, for example in different departments or teams (such as care teams, management, and ancillary teams) or shifts (such as day and night staff). Individual employers may also find subcultures within their team, even when they only employ several PAs.

Subcultures form when a group share common experiences or values, which can differ from the overall workplace culture. This can be seen by them displaying different behaviours or following objectives that are specific to that group.

Subcultures can be part of a positive workplace culture if the teams have different outcomes or tasks to achieve which require them to work in a different way to other teams. But only when the subculture complements and is aligned to the overall workplace culture and values. Your leaders and managers must identify and address any subcultures that are not aligned to your workplace vision, objectives, and values as these can have a negative impact not just within that team but across teams. Your leaders can do this by:

- reinforcing and regularly communicating your workplace vision, values and expected behaviours to all staff
- challenging behaviour that is not aligned with your workplace culture
- disrupting teams with negative subcultures by moving staff around to break up any clusters of negativity
- seeking support from HR and using your workplace values, behaviours, codes of conduct and policies to proactively challenge negative subcultures
- celebrating and promoting examples of positive subcultures.

Closed cultures

The CQC have an area of focus on closed cultures, which they define as "a poor culture that can lead to harm, including human rights breaches such as abuse. In these services, people are more likely to be at risk of deliberate or unintentional harm".

How CQC identifies and responds to closed cultures - Care Quality Commission [↗]

Closed cultures are more likely to develop in services where:

- people are removed from their communities
- people stay for months or years at a time
- there is weak leadership
- staff lack the right skills, training or experience to support people
- there is a lack of positive and open engagement between staff and with people using services and their families.

In these services, people are often not able to speak up for themselves - this could be through lack of communication skills, lack of support to speak up or abuse of their rights to speak up.

Warning signs include

- staff not understanding or speaking warmly about the people they are caring for
- care plans not being individualised or reflecting the person's voice
- lack of reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities
- poor or absent communication plans for people who have communication needs, communication plans not being followed
- potentially punitive approach to care
- decisions imposed on people without legal authority/legitimate aim
- reports of or observations of people who use services seeming uncomfortable around staff and not able to communicate openly
- excessive use of restraints, segregation or seclusion
- poorly skilled, lack of experienced staff and training
- poor or weak leadership and management.

> Having an open culture, and ensuring you challenge any closed subcultures in your workplace will provide evidence of the Well-led quality statement 'freedom to speak up': **We foster a positive culture where people feel that they can speak up and that their voice will be heard.**

Your leaders and managers can do this by:

- Ensuring leaders and staff are aware of their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, making reasonable adjustments and protecting those they care for and support from direct and indirect discrimination.
- Ensuring staff provide person centred care that is adapted to people's needs and free from any restrictions.
- Encouraging and supporting staff to raise any concerns and responding quickly and effectively to concerns.
- Welcoming and positively engaging with external agencies and families.
- Establishing a positive, blame free learning culture in teams.
- Involving those they provide care and support to, families and other professionals in developing their services.

Promoting open cultures

> **Creating a safe environment is the single most important responsibility we have as social care providers. We achieve this by fostering an open, transparent culture.**
>
> Head of Safeguarding, Sense

Creating a healthy, open culture requires effort from leadership to empower and inspire the entire organisation.

Here are three ways to build it:
- Make time for people, improve your accessibility, and encourage debate. Make openness a priority and create the conditions for healthy communication across all levels.
- Encourage face-to-face conversations that enable people and teams to break down silos. This includes both structured and unstructured meetings and supervision. Places where people are more likely to be honest and forward about their thoughts whether via meetings, calls, or emails.
- Allow healthy and respectful debate before decisions are made, and respect the decision after it's made.

Building an organisational culture where communication and discussion in the interest of the individual enables your organisation to provide truly person-centred care.

To enable this it is important to
- attract and keep talented employees based on their values in social care
- follow your core values - when these values guide your decisions, you act with transparency
- act with integrity, sometimes compromise is necessary on small issues but if you sacrifice your core values once, trust is eroded.

When leaders make themselves accessible, they set a positive example for their entire organisation. When leaders make time for discussion, they reach the best decisions, and employees are empowered to share their insights. An open culture includes, inspires, and connects everyone, involving them more deeply in the process of growth.

By creating an open culture, leaders create a momentum that allows them to focus on guiding with integrity and by core values to provide the best quality care.

Managing culture change and development

It's important to plan properly for change and have the flexibility to adapt to unexpected changes impacting on your culture. It's also important to consider how different people respond to change and how to engage your workforce in any changes.

Positive workplace cultures, which are well-led, should be responsive and resilient to change, whether they're through choice or necessity.

Challenging change is always difficult but if you engage with staff, explain why you need to change and involve them in the process it works really well. Most negativity comes from not knowing, not understanding and being out of your comfort zone. With communication, support and face to face meetings, you can support your staff through the transition successfully."

Care 4 You

Worksheet 8

Activity one - Identifying subcultures ⬇

Activity two - Focus on the future together ⬇

Activity three - How to manage continuous change ⬇

Resources to help:

The Human Rights Act ↗

CQC closed culture guidance ↗

National preventative mechanism ↗

Skills for Care guide to values-based recruitment ↗

The principles of workforce redesign ↗

'The principles of workforce redesign' can help organisations who are going through any form of organisational change or restructure.

The seven principles outline the key things you need to consider when changing the way your staff work.

The workforce outcomes measurement model ↗

'The workforce outcomes measurement model' can help you evaluate whether your workforce interventions are really making a difference to the individual who needs care and support. It provides a simple way of linking the impact and benefits of workforce interventions to measurable, person-centred outcomes for the individual, service, organisation and community.

Useful contacts

Skills for Care ⬈

Skills for Care has tools and resources to help social care and health employers recruit and retain staff with the right values, which are available on our website.

You can also email:

Organisational culture - culture@skillsforcare.org.uk ✉

Leadership development - leadership@skillsforcare.org.uk ✉

Values-based recruitment - randr@skillsforcare.org.uk ✉

Wellbeing - cultureandwellbeing@skillsforcare.org.uk ✉

The Messenger Review ⬈

Care Quality Commission (CQC) ⬈

VBA Consulting

Email: kerrycleary.vbaconsulting@gmail.com
Mobile: 07793956613

VBA Consulting is a specialist Values Based Leadership and Culture consultancy that provides expert coaching, advisory and training services to leaders and organisations in the public, voluntary and private sector on developing values based, safeguarding cultures, values based recruitment and values based leadership practices.