

# key characteristics

## How can informed decision-making be demonstrated?

- By the ability to explain complex decisions and situations to a variety of people, especially service users and carers.
- By the ability to communicate clearly, both orally and in writing, the process of decision-making.
- By the ability to explain the implications of the decision.
- By showing how knowledge has been synthesised and utilised.
- By having clear and concisely written assessments with action plans that are communicated to all, in particular to service users and carers. Service users and carers continue to report a lack of clarity about why exactly a social care organisation is still in contact with them and what is the aim of the contact.

## What supports informed decision-making?

- Continuous professional development.
- Keeping up to date with research.
- Learning critical appraisal skills.
- Good supervision to reflect on practice.
- Peer support and expertise.
- Learning from mistakes.
- Sharing knowledge.
- A learning environment that encourages the exploration of new ideas and is receptive to external influences.
- A clear value base.
- Service user participation as an ongoing process.
- A clear understanding of accountability.

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### **What hinders informed decision-making?**

- Rigidity about current custom and practice without critical evaluation.
- Inability to make use of existing knowledge, or active resistance to it.
- Poor accessibility of relevant information.
- Lack of curiosity about useful and new knowledge.
- Being distracted by irrelevant issues.
- Poor quality of management and supervision.
- A culture that is opposed to learning.
- Inadequate preparation or training for the job.
- A lack of clarity about the organisation's purpose.
- Poor internal and external communications systems.
- Patchy knowledge about the law and policy.
- A lack of thinking about decisions and their outcomes.
- Always being too busy.

### **What helps in overcoming barriers?**

- A recognition by everybody about how to effect change at different levels (individual, team, organisational).
- Individuals being empowered to challenge poor custom and practice and feed up through the learning organisation.

*Note:* A stable workforce plays an important role in learning and development.