

knowledge about learning organisations

Information systems (b)

Learning organisations require information systems that improve and support practice and that move beyond those used in traditional organisations where information is generally used for control purposes. 'Transformational change' requires more sophisticated information systems that facilitate rapid acquisition, processing and sharing of rich, complex information which enables effective knowledge management.

Policies and procedures – questions

- What systems are in place for ensuring that these are shared and agreed?
- Are policies underpinned by considerations of human rights and social justice?
- Are the reasons for the organisation's policies made clear? If backed by law, how accessible is legal information?
- Does the organisation have a strategy for making sure policy and procedure are in place in day-to-day services delivery?
- What systems are in place for ensuring that service user and carer views are fed up from the grass roots to influence policy?

Illustrative examples

- In one small voluntary organisation all staff are encouraged not just to read the policies and procedures during the induction period but also to give feedback and suggestions. This ensures not only that they are shared and understood but also treated as 'work in progress' that needs to be amended in response to external changes.
- Service users regularly report a lack of knowledge about policies and procedures and the reasons behind them, e.g. Do parents have a right to see what is written on their child's file, and if not, why not? Organisations need to make clear to service users, carers and other professionals, their policies, protocols and practices.

Useful reference

- Hopkins, G. (1998) *Plain English for social services*, Lyme Regis: Russell House.

Use the information and questions on the cards to think about a place of work as a learning organisation.