

the informed policy maker

Illustrative examples

- One large voluntary organisation ensures an open system of communication by:
 - involving the Chief Executive in its induction programme, which lasts for one week and is the same for all staff
 - setting up meetings for senior managers and frontline staff, leaving out middle management
 - holding meetings for staff where *any* issue can be raised
 - creating opportunities for dialogue *outside* the formal organisational structures.
- The same organisation aims for ongoing learning by:
 - ensuring that staff training needs are validated by service users and carers
 - learning from getting things right as well as getting things wrong
 - examining, reviewing and learning from the 'near misses'.

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- A social services department has:
 - a director who meets all students that have had a recent placement, twice a year, to learn from their experiences
 - a policy that all positive commendations received about staff from any route or source are always copied to all members of the management team
 - a staff conference once a year on 'pride in what we do' with service users and carers providing a video on their views of the department
 - a phone line for staff to ring when they encounter a need for a service that does not exist at present
 - an annual discussion with looked-after young people on the outcomes and role of the corporate parent.
- In another social services department councillors are encouraged to:
 - undertake wide-ranging visits to all parts of the organisation
 - attend conferences and courses and network outside the organisation
 - promote the idea that councillors and staff should assess the standards of practice and services with the question 'What if it were me or my family?'
 - actively consider whether ideas from other departments would work in this one, and whether the policy or service in this department would work elsewhere.
- One small charity has a monthly seminar where staff present their work. Lunch is provided and invitations are for *both* staff (including administrative) and trustees.