

knowledge about learning organisations

Leadership (b)

Like most interventions aimed at securing significant organisational improvement, organisational learning depends heavily on effective leadership. Leaders model the openness, risk-taking and reflection necessary for learning, and communicate a compelling vision of the learning organisation, providing empathy, support and personal advocacy needed to lead others towards it. They ensure that organisations and work groups have the capacity to learn, change and develop.

Leadership at all levels modelling the key principles – questions

- How do senior staff, trustees, members and governors 'listen and respond' to both professionals and users?
- How do managerial staff regularly update their knowledge and skills?
- Is there 360° appraisal?
- Is leadership widely distributed throughout the organisation?
- Can teams demonstrate leadership?

Illustrative examples

- The Children and Families Division of one local authority have quarterly away days for the whole division where there is the opportunity to inform, question and challenge the Assistant Director and the management team.
- All new managers are encouraged and supported to gain a Diploma in Management within their first two years in the job. They are then supported in management forums where learning is self-directed, in management 'master classes', and coaching and mentoring programmes are provided.
- The Department of Health has funding for workforce planning and development. Social care organisations should be making use of this money.

Useful references

- Hudson, M. (1999) *Managing without profit*, 2nd edn, London: Directory of Social Change.
- McDonnell, F. (2003) 'Leadership and management development', Leeds: Topss.

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