

knowledge about learning organisations

Organisational culture (a)

Learning organisations have strong cultures that promote openness, creativity, and experimentation among members. They encourage members to acquire, process and share information, nurture innovation and provide the freedom to try new things, to risk failure and to learn from mistakes.

A system of shared beliefs, values, goals and objectives – questions

- Does the organisation have a written statement about its values, goals and objectives?
- If there is written documentation, how accessible is this to all?
- How and where is it checked out that everybody understands and supports them?
- How do service user views influence beliefs? Is there a culture of genuinely working *with* service users? How could you demonstrate this?
- How are difference and conflict dealt with and managed?
- Does day-to-day practice really link to the stated goals, values and beliefs?

Illustrative examples

- In one medium-sized agency the philosophy and values are clearly stated on all the publicity materials. Questions are asked at interview to ascertain the candidate's response and commitment to these core values.
- When considering ideas for development it is important to ask whether they fit with the organisation's goals and objectives.
- One organisation has 'Difference' on the agenda at all team and managers' meetings to try to ensure that it is aired, addressed and worked on.

Useful reference

- Fisher, R. and Ury, W. (1991) *Getting to yes*, London: Century Business.

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