

Inspiring leaders to  
improve children's lives

# Building and implementing an effective local workforce strategy

**Module 6: crafting workforce strategy actions**  
August 2010

Resource

# Preface

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Building and implementing an effective local workforce strategy is a valuable activity a local area can embark on to enable the delivery of its ambitions for children's services. Put simply, it is not "organisations", but the people within them, that make change happen – and workforce strategy is about people.

A workforce strategy summarises how each of the organisations working with children and young people intend to work together to make certain that everyone is excellent in their practice, committed to partnership and collaborative working, respected and valued as a professional and ambitious for every child and young person.

This local workforce strategy guide has been developed jointly by the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services (National College), the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) and the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), working collaboratively to improve the support and service we can offer the children's workforce.

This is a practical, "how to" guide designed to provide support and a framework of guiding principles from the start to the end of the process of creating and implementing a local workforce strategy, no matter where the local area is on that journey. The guide has been written for the use of any individual or group whose professional role involves working towards helping children achieve more and securing the best possible results for children and families.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As these materials have been published separately on the CWDC and National College websites there may be minor discrepancies in language between the two versions, although content remains largely consistent.

# Introduction and overview

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A local children and young people's<sup>2</sup> workforce strategy (workforce strategy) is a key document that draws together all that local organisations aim to do to attract, retain, support and develop everyone working with children and young people in their local area.

Building and implementing an effective local workforce strategy is a valuable activity a local area can embark on to enable the delivery of its ambitions for children and young people.

This practical, how to guide is designed to provide support at each stage of creating and implementing a workforce strategy, whether that is:

- **at the start:** trying to understand what a workforce strategy is and its local, regional and national context
- **already underway:** either reviewing or refining a workforce strategy
- **complete:** and ready to be promoted and implemented; or
- **being implemented:** requiring sustained focus and momentum, as well as regular review to ensure it is having the desired impact

There is a slide deck 'building and implementing an effective local workforce strategy' to accompany this how to guide, all slide references refer to this document.

Workforce strategy and other human resources (HR) activities

A workforce strategy, also sometimes known as "HR strategy" or "people strategy", provides the direction and principles which managers and practitioners need to guide decision making and in order to create their own, more detailed, people related plans.

In every agency and service area, and often at department level within them, one would hope to see a number of detailed plans and strategies being regularly developed and reviewed, such as:

- workforce plans<sup>3</sup>
- recruitment, reward and retention plans
- training and development plans (guided by skills and qualifications audits)
- continuous professional development plans
- leadership development plans
- succession plans
- their own workforce or HR strategies

The local workforce strategy does not seek to replace any of these, rather it seeks to be informed by them, respond to them and provide direction to them in an ongoing cycle (slide 4).

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this document children & young people should be read to include their families & carers where appropriate

<sup>3</sup> Workforce planning is sometimes confused with workforce strategy. Workforce planning is focused on estimating an organisation's future staffing requirements and calculating the numbers, nature and sources of potential full time and temporary staff who might meet that demand.

# Background to the guide

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'Building and implementing an effective local workforce strategy' has been developed jointly by the **National College**, the **CWDC** and the **TDA**. The immediate focus of activity is support to local areas with workforce strategy and planning to ensure everyone working with children and young people is:

- ambitious for every child and young person
- excellent in their practice
- committed to partnership and integrated working
- respected and valued as a professional

## Priorities

- Understanding the real time workforce issues facing local areas.
- Collaborating to achieve local solutions that encourage sustainable change.
- Working together to ensure best use of resources, shared efficiency and increased effectiveness.

## Roles of development partners

The **National College** works to develop and inspire great leadership across children's centres, schools and children's services so that leaders and their teams can make a real and positive difference to the lives of children and young people. Our four key goals are:

- inspiring new leaders
- great leadership development
- inspiring successful leadership
- shaping future leadership

**CWDC** specialises in the development of the children and young people's workforce. Our immediate focus is on early years, social work, young people's workforce, social care and the integration of leadership and management of children's services in local authorities.

**TDA** focuses on developing the skills of the children's workforce in schools and ensures that schools can recruit good quality, well trained people who will continue to develop and improve their skills to support children's learning and development. We work to secure the supply and quality of the teaching workforce and promote teaching as a career. We also support the modernisation of the children's workforce in schools by helping schools to access the resources they need to remodel their workforce, deploy their staff effectively and introduce extended services.

## Links

National College: [www.nationalcollege.org.uk](http://www.nationalcollege.org.uk)  
CWDC: [www.cwdcouncil.org.uk](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk)  
TDA: [www.tda.gov.uk](http://www.tda.gov.uk)

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## Overriding principles

By following this guide, the organisations involved can be certain that their efforts will result in a local workforce strategy that is not only well thought-out and achievable, but will also follow and promote a set of fundamental overriding principles:

- Involving children and young people, their families and carers in the decisions that affect them.
- Engaging staff from all levels in shaping the children’s workforce of the future.
- Including all workforce groups (or sectors) working with children and young people in the process.
- Promoting integrated working and reducing barriers and obstacles to this approach wherever and whenever possible.
- Being focused, both in terms of how resources are deployed and on making a real, tangible difference in the lives of children and young people.
- Driving more efficient operations of children’s services to achieve the best possible value for money from the continued investment.
- Ensuring a diverse children’s workforce that is representative of the community it serves, and in which everybody is treated fairly and offered equal opportunities.
- Striving to create a fully engaged, motivated and enthusiastic children’s workforce, made up of high performing teams.
- Investing in the ongoing development of those working with children and young people to ensure that they have the right levels of qualification and experience, skills and knowledge.
- Inspiring the children’s workforce through visionary, expert leadership and creating a succession pipeline of capable managers and leaders for the future.
- Collecting, analysing and acting on data intelligently in order to drive performance and focus resources.

# Who is the guide designed for?

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This guide could be useful to a number of audience groups, such as:

- the person or group of people directly responsible for drafting and implementing the workforce strategy – the developers of the local workforce strategy and actions
- the main sponsor of the local workforce strategy activity
- other active senior stakeholders, senior managers and leaders in the organisations involved who act as internal advocates and sponsors within their relevant organisations
- actively involved human resources and training practitioners, policy and commissioning leads, or people involved in evidence gathering or implementation projects

## **Developers**

The guide has been written primarily for local workforce strategy developers. If you are the developer of your local workforce strategy, you will find in each module an explanation of what it is about and why it is important, followed by a range of practical support materials such as individual or group exercises, case studies and useful links.

## **Sponsors**

If you are a sponsor of the local workforce strategy activity you will find a checklist at the end of each section giving suggestions of how you, in your role, can best support and promote the activity in that module. You will find that the role of sponsor is not a passive one, there are many doors that require opening, obstacles to remove and, importantly, tough questions to be asked along the way.

## **Active stakeholders**

The guide has been written in modules which allows you to dip in to the modules relating to the activity areas you have been asked to contribute to or participate in.

# How to use the guide

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The guide is broken down into four sections, each made up of a number of modules. Each section is designed to provide all the necessary support you need at that stage of building and implementing a workforce strategy. This allows you to use just the section most useful to you at your stage of the journey.

## **End to end approach**

For areas which want a fresh start for their workforce strategy, the guide can also be used to support you from start to finish. It suggests an end to end approach that you can follow or adapt to suit your local needs.

## **Assessing where you are**

A simple diagnostic is provided in Appendix 1. It provides some key and important criteria against which you can assess your existing workforce strategy. This will help to highlight areas that could be further developed or improved and to identify the modules which could support those activities.

## **Promotional materials**

In addition to this guide, some materials have been developed to help you to introduce the local workforce strategy activity to stakeholders in your local area. A slide pack has been provided that can be used to support workshops covering some or all of the approach, along with suggested formats for the workshops themselves.

Important note: The guide references a number of documents which were published prior to 11 May 2010 by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). These documents are still being made available by the Department for Education (DfE). No indication has yet been given as to if and when the DfE will publish alternatives.

# Module 6: crafting workforce strategy actions

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By the end of this module, you will have:

- established a clear picture of the strengths and development opportunities within the existing workforce and identified the issues and gaps
- created a range of innovative solutions to tackle the key workforce challenges identified within the workforce strategy
- engaged a group of stakeholders to map the proposed workforce strategy actions against their likely impact on the objectives set for children's services, in order to select which priorities to focus on
- prioritised the workforce strategy actions so that you are confident that:
  - there is sufficient resource to implement and sustain them
  - the children's workforce has the ability to absorb the change within the planned timescales
- drafted a detailed workforce strategy action plan

Workforce strategy actions declare what the partner organisations actually plan to do in order to achieve their vision for the future children's workforce. It defines the gap between the vision and where they are currently positioned and describes the creative solutions that have been agreed upon, as well as who has taken responsibility for the actions and the planned timescales for their implementation.

Crafting workforce strategy actions involves the following elements:

- conducting a gap analysis of where the children's workforce is currently positioned against the vision
- developing a range of creative solutions to bridge the gaps
- selecting and prioritising the strategy actions which will have the greatest impact
- creating a detailed strategy action plan

## Conducting a gap analysis: where are we now?

There are a number of sources of information (or evidence) that could help to establish the current position of the children's workforce against the vision. These include:

- observations made by key stakeholders during interviews (Exercise 2.3)
- input from focus groups and workshops made up from representative groups from across the children's workforce
- feedback from children, young people, their families and carers about what they want from their children's workforce
- progress made with the implementation of the actions from the previous workforce strategy (if in place)
- inspection reports
- internal audits and self-assessments, including the outcome from work with the children's workforce tool
- workforce data which helps to build a quantitative picture of the existing situation



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A gap analysis looks at your current position against the set of priorities, and takes into account the importance of the priorities in terms of how they impact on services for children and young people. This helps to identify those areas most requiring focus and effort. Guidelines and a template to assist with this are provided in Exercise 6.1.

## The children's workforce tool

The children's workforce tool self-assessments can be used to provide scores for the gap analysis exercise as well as to establish a baseline against which to measure progress going forward. A range of tools and techniques are provided within the tool to help to make sense of the data.

## Workforce data

Workforce data helps to inform workforce strategy on areas such as the ageing workforce, diversity, equality and recruitment gaps. More detailed workforce planning, however, is completed as a separate task within each partner organisation. Workforce data can usually be collated from each organisation working with children and young people by contacting their HR managers.

## Developing a range of creative solutions to bridge the gaps

A local workforce strategy provides the opportunity for working collaboratively to design imaginative and creative ways of tackling the key workforce challenges faced.

Creative problem solving is the best method of approaching the strategic challenges posed by the workforce strategy. It usually involves a team approach, because people within the children's workforce are most engaged in change processes when they have participated in looking for creative solutions. People often hold the keys to innovation within themselves and only need the right outlet to share their experience based ideas.

There are many techniques and tools for creative problem solving, a number of which are set out in Appendix 2. These can be used to structure and run creative sessions. Short case studies showing how local areas have found creative solutions for the challenges they faced are provided in Appendix 3.

There are increasing opportunities to collaborate with other areas in order to find joint solutions to regional issues. There are a number of forums and tools set up to help with this, such as regional meetings for strategic integrated working leads or directors of children's services, and Share Street ([www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/ShareStreet](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/ShareStreet)).

# Selecting and prioritising the strategy actions which will have the greatest impact

## Mapping the likely impact of workforce strategy actions

In order to select priorities for the workforce strategy, the links between proposed workforce strategy actions and their impact on local objectives and outcomes for children and young people should be explored.

Template 6 can be used for this activity and is provided in Appendix 4.

In the worked example below, improving safeguarding is an overall priority. There is recognition that many safeguarding incidents are caused by a lack of cooperation and collaboration across various children's services practitioners. Proposed workforce activities include common induction, improving CAF support for practitioners and developing an e-learning portal. (Further guidelines are given in Exercise 6.3)

How local area is measuring	Resulting issue	Workforce related root Cause of		Desired outcome	Proposed workforce strategy action	Workforce strategy objective
decrease in re-offending rates decrease in substance use	how to support young people to break cycles of crime and drug use	Lack of confidence across services using CAF effectively		young people access support earlier	improve CAF support for practitioners	increase the proportion of the workforce using CAF effectively

Another useful tool is the **TDA impact evaluation model**. This can be used to ensure the right actions are put in place, or to assess impact along the way.

## Prioritising to ensure there are sufficient resources to deliver the action plan

If the workforce strategy is to have credibility and deliver its maximum impact then there will inevitably need to be a degree of prioritisation on those areas of workforce development that will deliver the most positive benefit.

It is important that a robust approach is used to establish not only the optimum amount of activity with the available time and resource but also to confirm that the staff and managers in each sector are able to respond to the amount of change or development activity introduced through the implementation of the workforce strategy actions.

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There are two distinct elements to this approach, one looking at prioritisation and the other looking at the impact of change.

- **Prioritisation:** this approach involves going through each of the potential solution areas and assessing each against both their “do-ability” and the impact they will have. This takes into account the resource available and ensures potential actions that are both affordable and high impact are identified and prioritised. It is vital to ensure that the actions and objectives that are eventually included in the workforce strategy are able to be delivered within the timeframe and the necessary resources have been identified to make this happen. Guidelines on how to do this are provided in Exercise 6.4
- **impact of change:** used to assess the extent of change that would need to take place which people will need to respond to. This exercise, explained further in Exercise 6.5, ensures that the following has been thought about:
  - whether the target audience can respond effectively to the level of change required
  - whether there is too much happening too soon and hence may need to be staged
  - if additional support needs to be put in place to ensure change is absorbed effectively

## Creating a detailed strategy action plan

The same benefits are available to those employing a team-planning approach whether they're developing the workforce strategy or the strategy action plan. These benefits include the broader input contributed by a greater number of individual participants.

A less obvious, but equally important, advantage of the team-planning approach is the commitment which comes from participation. Those involved develop a vested interest in seeing the plan through to its successful implementation. Simply stated, those involved in the plan's creation feel a part of it and a concern for its success.

There are many useful online resources to support effective action planning, and many partner organisations and local authorities have a standard template, which this guide does not seek to duplicate. The key points to think about are:

- are the links to outcomes clear for every action point?
- has a person or group or people been identified to implement each action?
- are detailed action steps listed out?
- have a completion date and key milestones been agreed?
- have all stakeholders likely to be affected by this action been identified?
- have the resource requirements been highlighted and enabled?
- have we got the necessary approvals to implement this action?
- have we looked for opportunities to run pilots or adopt a phased approach?

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## Outcomes based accountability – turning the curve

The outcomes based accountability (OBA) framework is applicable to anyone looking to make a positive impact on the quality of life in communities. It is widely used by a range of children's services and partnerships and increasingly by local strategic partnerships and local authorities.

OBA is a disciplined way of thinking and moving from 'talk to action' quickly that can be used to improve well being across communities and improve the performance of services and agencies. The OBA model offers tools and a coherent framework for strategic planning; evidence based commissioning and monitoring what works to improve outcomes. Further information about OBA can be found on the I&DeA website: [www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)

# Recommended activities

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## Exercise 6.1: conducting a gap analysis: where are we now?

The first step of the gap analysis is to reduce the list of workforce priorities and issues listed in previous exercises (1.1, 2.3 and 3.1) using Template 1, provided in Appendix 4. This is achieved by grouping related items under headings. If key focus areas or strategic themes were created then these should act as the starting point.

Next, use Template 5 to summarise the main priorities along with an assessment (using criteria defined by the exercise group) of:

- their importance in terms of how they are likely to impact on improved services for children and young people
- the current position of the organisations involved

This will help to identify the issues and priorities requiring immediate and urgent focus.

## Exercise 6.2: creative problem solving

Once the gaps between the workforce strategy vision and the current state are identified, solutions to bridge those gaps need to be developed. This is best accomplished by using one or more of the creative problem solving techniques provided in Appendix 2, probably in a workshop setting with a number of representatives from across the children's workforce.

The solutions will be in the form of workforce strategy actions, but usually other actions and recommendations are identified which can be implemented as part of the normal responsibilities of individuals or departments within children's services.

Include a step to look for opportunities to work collaboratively to find solutions for regional issues.

## Exercise 6.3: mapping the likely impact of workforce strategy actions

First gauge the impact each of the proposed workforce strategy actions could have against the objectives for children's services in order to select which ones to focus on. A simple matrix can be used to do this (see slide 35). The measurement criteria (in this case high, medium and low) should be discussed and agreed by the participant group to ensure common understanding.

Then create a table (like the example below) listing relevant key performance indicators (KPIs) and resulting objectives on the left. Work inwards to identify the workforce related root causes of these issues. Then work inwards from the right listing the relevant workforce strategy objective and related action, discussing what outcome this will lead to. If the outcome does not address the root cause issue identified on the left, the proposed workforce activities can be reviewed and refined. Both matrices are provided in Template 6, provided in Appendix 4.

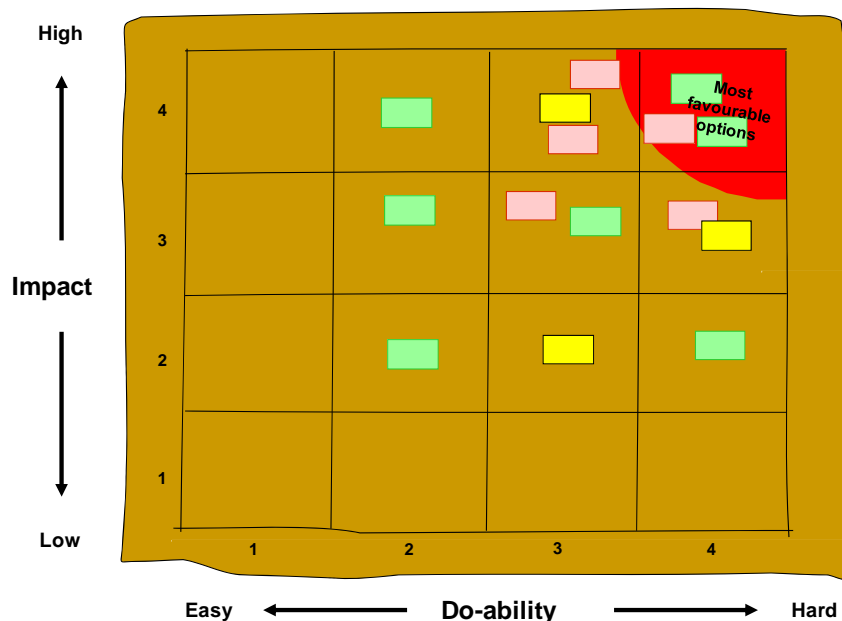
Potential workforce strategy action	Desired response to activity	Desired outcome	How trust is measuring progress (KPI)	Potential root cause of issue	Local children's partnership objective
improve CAF support for practitioners	increase the proportion of the workforce using CAF effectively	young people receive support earlier	decrease in re-offending rates decrease in substance misuse	lack of confidence across services in using CAF as an effective solution	increase support to young people to break cycles of crime and drug use

### Exercise 6.4: prioritising workforce strategy actions according to resources

To conduct an "impact/do-ability" exercise, first list the proposed strategy actions and rate them according to their impact and their do-ability, both on a scale of 1 to 4:

- The impact score could be influenced by the degree of impact and on how many objectives or outcomes the actions are likely to affect
- The do-ability score could be calculated by considering a combination of costs, effort, timescales and risk.

Then plot each proposed strategy action on a matrix, as shown below. The proposed actions in the top right corner will be the most favourable options from the resources perspective. Further guidelines on prioritisation matrices can be found on the TDA website: [www.tda.gov.uk/remodelling/managingchange/tools/prioritisation\\_matrices.aspx](http://www.tda.gov.uk/remodelling/managingchange/tools/prioritisation_matrices.aspx)



## Exercise 6.5: assessing the impact of change

The impact of change can be assessed by thinking about each area of change under a number of headings, as shown in the worked example below. A template (Template 7) is provided in Appendix 4 to help with this.

Description of change	Who will it impact?	Level of impact	Nature of impact	Pressure points	Actions
adopting common values	whole children's workforce	medium	communications, training leaders and managers induction	training time publishing costs website update	build into management forum agendas identify budget
embedding common core	HR and training managers leaders and managers	high	re-writing HR policies, procedures, guidelines, communication	training time cost of republishing documents website update	identify budget, temporary HR support, build into management forum agendas

## Checklist for sponsors

Sponsors can support and enable the activities in this module by:

- enabling discussions to determine the gaps between where you are today versus the workforce strategy vision
- emphasising and promoting the importance of team-based, creative problem solving
- taking part in and enabling creative problem solving exercises
- using the outcomes impact mapping exercise to positively influence other senior stakeholders and promote generally the importance of workforce development
- introducing a sense of reality and challenge to the prioritisation and selection of workforce strategy actions
- ensuring that the workforce strategy action plan is well developed and thought out and gets signed off by the appropriate stakeholders
- making sure that key senior stakeholders not included in action prioritising and planning discussions are brought along and agree with the decisions made

# Appendix 1: the local workforce strategy diagnostic

The following questions are designed to help give you a perspective on your workforce strategy and the process you have gone through to establish it.

Question	Useful modules	Useful exercises
Have we developed clear links between the workforce strategy and the children's plan?	1	
Have we identified the workforce implications of the children's plan?	1	1.1
Are the workforce strategy and children's plan cycles mapped and aligned?	1	1.2
Have we aligned the workforce strategy locally?	2	
Do we have a good understanding of who makes up our children's workforce, possibly presented in a stakeholder map?	2	2.1
Do we have a clear picture of the local partnership arrangements?	2	2.2
Have we identified the local priorities for the children's workforce by interviewing key stakeholders within each sector?	2	2.3
Have we identified the workforce implications of the local community strategy and local area agreements?	2	2.3
Do we understand the local workforce development priorities highlighted in the workforce strategies, people plans and other documents for each of the sectors in our children's trust?	2	2.3
Have we asked children, young people and their families how they would like the future children's workforce to be shaped?	2, 10	
Have we asked staff at all levels and managers from across the children's workforce to participate in shaping the future of the children's workforce?	2, 10	
Have we aligned our workforce strategy nationally and regionally?	3	



Question	Useful modules	Useful exercises
Do we understand the national context in which our workforce strategy sits?	3	
Have we identified the national priorities for the children's workforce?	3	3.1
Are we effectively project managing the workforce strategy activity and cycle?	4	
Have we decided on an overall model and approach to our strategy activity?	4	4.1
Have we considered the lessons we can learn from the past?	4	4.2
Has the children's partnership scoped the overall ambitions of the workforce strategy activity?	4	4.3
Have we scoped the HR elements to be included in the workforce strategy?	4	4.3
Do we know who to engage in the workforce strategy activities, and when?	4	4.4
Have we created a formal project plan or project charter for the workforce strategy activity?	4	4.1
Have we defined a shared vision of where we want to be?	5	
Have we created a clear and motivating vision statement?	5	5.1
Have we identified the key focus areas of strategic themes of the workforce strategy?	5	5.2
Are a core set of agreed principles in place?	5	5.3
Do we know what we have to do in order to achieve our vision?	6	
Have we conducted a gap analysis to determine where we are now?	6	6.1
Have we made use of evidence such as audit reports, Ofsted and other inspection reports ?	6	

Question	Useful modules	Useful exercises
Have we thought about how to use the children's workforce tool to establish a baseline and support our gap analysis?	6	
Have we developed a range of creative solutions to bridge the gaps?	6	6.2
Could we come up with more effective solutions by embracing creative techniques and engaging in group problem solving?	6	6.2
Are we confident that we have selected and prioritised the strategy actions which will have the greatest impact?	6	
Have we mapped the likely impact of workforce strategy actions?	6	6.3
Are our actions prioritised to ensure there are sufficient resources to deliver the action plan?	6	6.4
Have we assessed the likely impact of the proposed changes?	6	6.5
Do we have a detailed strategy action plan in place – and is it up to date?	6	
Are we confident about the implementation of our workforce strategy?	7	
Are we clear on what structure we need for the strategy document?	7	7.1
Do we know what look and feel we want for our strategy?	7	7.1
Have we taken the needs of our target audience groups into consideration?	7	7.2
Have we thought how best to launch and then promote and communication about the workforce strategy on an ongoing basis?	8	
Have we identified key formal and informal leaders to endorse the workforce strategy and the importance of workforce development?	8	

Question	Useful modules	Useful exercises
Have we established links, and possibly created a working group, of marketing and communications managers from across the children's partnership?	8	8.1
Do we know what the communication and marketing review and sign off procedures are in each of the partner organisations?	8	8.1
Have we planned an exciting launch of the workforce strategy?	8	8.2
Is there a communications plan in place which sets out the key messages and activities to move from awareness building to keep understanding?	8	8.3
Are we effectively implementing the workforce strategy actions?	9	
Have we identified the key internal factors enabling or blocking implementation at a local level?	9	9.1
Is there a programme of change in place?	9	
Are we fostering an innovative, creative and challenging approach to the implementation projects?	9	
Is there support for working in multi-agency or cross-functional teams wherever possible?	9	
Do we know who is responsible and who is accountable for the implementation of every action?	9	9.2
Does everybody implementing strategy actions understand what to report on, when and how?	9, 10	9.2
Are we helping individuals and teams to understand what the workforce strategy means for them personally?	9	9.3
Do we have an effective, agreed, workforce strategy cycle?	10	
Is the workforce strategy cycle linked into existing planning cycles and governance structures?	10	10.1

Question	Useful modules	Useful exercises
Are the workforce strategy cycle and children's plan cycle well aligned? Are commissioning and performance management cycles also taken into consideration?	10	10.1
Are we monitoring and measuring how effectively we're managing the workforce strategy cycle and activities?	11	11.1
Have we identified and mitigated any risks to the workforce strategy activity, and are we reviewing these appropriately?	11	11.2
Are we confident that we are doing the right things, and doing things right?	12	
Do we regularly review the impact the workforce strategy is having on meeting our children's plan and local area objectives?	12	12.1
Do we regularly review the impact the workforce strategy is having on the lives of children and young people, and do we consult them first hand as part of this process?	12	12.1
Do we regularly review the impact the workforce strategy is having on the working environment and job satisfaction of our staff and managers, and do we consult with them first had as part of the process?	12	12.1

# Appendix 2: creative problem solving techniques

There are a number of excellent online resources to support creative problem solving, such as:

- the “remodelling” section on the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) website: [www.tda.gov.uk/remodelling/managingchange/tools.aspx](http://www.tda.gov.uk/remodelling/managingchange/tools.aspx)
- mindtools: [www.mindtools.com](http://www.mindtools.com)

Selecting which creativity technique to use largely depends on the number and make-up of the group of people participating, and the purpose of the activity.

Purpose	Recommended techniques
service improvement	reversal; SCAMPER
many new ideas	brainstorming; ideastorming, 6-3-5 brainwriting, windtunnel
getting to the root cause of issues	WILO; fishbone analysis; the 5 why's
problem solving / creative solutions	Osborn-Parnes, provocation, appreciative enquiry, 6 thinking hats

A few of these techniques are described below:

## Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a group creativity technique designed to generate a large number of ideas for the solution of a specific problem. There are four basic rules in brainstorming. These are intended to reduce social inhibitions among group members, stimulate idea generation, and increase overall creativity of the group.

- Focus on quantity: The assumption is that the greater the number of ideas generated, the greater the chance of producing a radical and effective solution.
- Withhold criticism: In brainstorming, criticism of ideas generated should be put on hold. Instead, participants should focus on extending or adding to ideas, reserving criticism for a later critical stage of the process.
- Welcome unusual ideas: To get a good and long list of ideas, unusual ideas are welcomed. They can be generated by looking from new perspectives and suspending assumptions. These new ways of thinking may provide better solutions.
- Combine and improve ideas: Good ideas may be combined to form a single better good idea.

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Further details about brainstorming can be found on the TDA website:  
[www.tda.gov.uk/remodelling/managingchange/tools/brainstorming.aspx](http://www.tda.gov.uk/remodelling/managingchange/tools/brainstorming.aspx)

Ideastorming is similar to brainstorming but is done silently, with a group of individuals recording one idea per post-it note and adding these to a wall or flip-chart. This overcomes the creativity blocks that sometimes occur in a more structured brainstorming setting, particularly for groups of staff at different levels or who do not know each other well.

## Brainwriting 6-3-5

The aim of 6-3-5 brainwriting is to generate 108 new ideas in half an hour. An individual records an idea on a sheet of paper (see example below) and then passes it on to the next person who uses them as a trigger for their own ideas. The technique involves 6 participants who sit in a group and are supervised by a facilitator. Each participant thinks up 3 ideas every 5 minutes. Participants are encouraged to draw on others' ideas for inspiration, thus stimulating the creative process. After 6 rounds in 30 minutes the group has thought up a total of 108 ideas.

Problem statement			
	idea 1	idea 2	idea 3
participant 1			
participant 2			
participant 3			

## Wind tunnel

Wind tunnel is a pair's activity in which one person (the wind-tunneller) has to talk about the challenge and potential solutions for 12 straight minutes - without pause or hesitation. The listening partner records the outcomes of these 12 minutes. The pairs will then compare notes on what they think were the most interesting ideas that emerged. The 'wind-tunneller' shouldn't think too much about exactly what they are saying, rather they should focus on answering the question in as many different ways and in as much detail as they can within the 12 minutes.

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## The Osborn-Parnes problem-solving model

This model is a process, method, or system for approaching a problem in an imaginative way and resulting in effective action. It uses the following steps:

- **Mess:** finding an effort to identify a situation that presents a challenge.
- **Data:** finding an effort to identify all known facts related to the situation; to seek and identify information that is not known but essential to the situation is identified and sought.
- **Problem:** finding an effort to identify all the possible problem statements and then to isolate the most important or underlying problem.
- **Idea:** finding an effort to identify as many solutions to the problem statement as possible.
- **Solution:** finding using a list of selected criteria to choose the best solution(s) for action.
- **Acceptance:** finding making every effort to gain acceptance for the solution, determine a plan of action, and implement the solution.

## SCAMPER

SCAMPER is a checklist that helps you to think of changes you can make to an existing product to create a new one. You can use these changes either as direct suggestions or as starting points for lateral thinking.

- **S** - substitute - components, materials, people
- **C** - combine - mix, combine with other assemblies or services, integrate
- **A** - adapt - alter, change function, use part of another element
- **M** - modify - increase or reduce in scale, change shape, modify attributes (e.g. colour)
- **P** - put to another use
- **E** - eliminate - remove elements, simplify, reduce to core functionality
- **R** - reverse - turn inside out or upside down

For each problem or challenge faced the group will need to think of an answer to each of the seven aspects of SCAMPER. This can be done as a whole group or on an individual basis where ideas are discussed once each person has completed their own SCAMPER.

## Provocation

Provocation is an important lateral thinking technique. It works by moving your thinking out of the established patterns that you use to solve problems. Sometimes it's possible that you already know the solutions to problems in different contexts but the structure of our brains makes it difficult for us to make this link.

- Begin by making deliberately stupid statements (Provocations), in which something taken for granted about the situation is not true.
- Suspend judgment and use that statement to generate ideas. Provocations give us original starting points for creative thinking.

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Once you have made the provocation you will then answer a series of questions against the statement:

- what are the consequences of the statement?
- what are the benefits?
- what special circumstances would make it a sensible solution?
- the principles needed to support it and make it work?
- how it would work moment-to-moment?
- what would happen if a sequence of events was changed?

## Six thinking hats

Developed by Edward de Bono, this well known technique is a lateral thinking tool for group discussion and individual thinking. It helps individuals or groups to look at important decisions from a number of different perspectives and aids decision making by forcing people to move outside their habitual ways of thinking.

To use six thinking hats to improve the quality of decision-making, look at the decision "wearing" each of the thinking hats in turn. Each "thinking hat" is a different style of thinking: white hat – state the facts, red hat – state the emotions, black hat – negative aspects, yellow hat – positive aspects, blue hat – sum up, green hat – creative ideas.

## Appreciative enquiry

This approach to problem solving involves taking unusual step of focussing on what's going right for you. This involves shifting to a positive perspective, look at the things that are working, and build on them. In some situations this can be very powerful because, by focusing on positives, you can build the unique strengths which bring real success.

The issue is explored in four phases: define discovery, dream and design.

- **Define the problem:** just as your decision to look at the positives will move you in a positive direction, defining your topic positively will help you look at its positive aspects.
- **Discovery phase:** look for the best of what has happened in the past, and what is currently working well.
- **Dream phase:** in this phase, participants dream of "what might be". Think about how you can take the positives you identified in the discovery phase, and reinforce them to build real strengths.
- **Design phase:** building on the dream, this phase looks at the practicalities needed to support the vision. Here you start to drill down the types of systems, processes, and strategies that will enable the dream to be realised.

Reversal works in a similar way, asking the opposite of the question you are really trying to answer. It is particularly effective when looking at service improvements. For example, "how could we reduce customer satisfaction?". Examine the answers for ideas of how you could do the opposite and solve the problem.



# Appendix 3: case studies, creative solutions

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## Waltham Forest: e-learning community

### **Why was a solution needed?**

Waltham Forest wanted to have the internal capacity to grow and develop their own workforce rather than recruiting skills from external sources.

The learning and development team also wanted the workforce to have the opportunity to undertake blended learning activities in which they can select the best activities to suit their own pace, learning style and level, as well as time and place using a range of techniques and resources.

### **What solution was developed?**

Waltham Forest subscribed to learning pool, an e-learning exchange company for the public sector. This allows Waltham Forest to create, share and access e-learning content with the 86 per cent of councils in the country who belong to the learning pool community.

They are currently in the process of rolling out e-learning in the authority. This has involved raising awareness of their e-learning zone, how to access and use the e-learning and resources and also encouraging services to learn how to develop their own e-learning materials.

### **What is the desired impact of this solution?**

The use of learning pool should result in Waltham Forest having a highly knowledgeable workforce through their ability to share resources and learn from their peers in other children's trusts. The workforce will be able to access information and training instantly rather than having to wait for appropriate training courses to become available.

---

## East Sussex: online support for voluntary sector workforce development

### **Why was a solution needed?**

Many voluntary sector organisations aren't able to provide training programmes for staff and volunteers due to cost and resource restrictions. East Sussex Children's Services wanted to find a method of enabling organisations to help each other to train and develop their staff and volunteers in a collaborative and cost effective manner.

### **What solution was developed?**

Using the Workforce Strategy Partners Programme (WSPP) grant, East Sussex developed the skillshare website to be accessed by all third sector organisations. The website is aimed at providing individuals and teams with the skills and knowledge to work effectively and make a positive difference to the lives of young people. The website includes areas such as:

- swap shop: sharing and promoting workforce development opportunities; making requests to share skills and training costs
- tools, resources and links: includes a database of local training organisations and a training needs analysis tool
- e-bulletin –monthly newsletter highlighting workforce development issues and local training opportunities

### **What is the desired impact of this solution?**

It is hoped that skillshare will become a supportive online community of third sector organisations who are in regular communication with one another and an integral part of the East Sussex third sector community. It will be the first port of call for organisations hoping to address workforce development issues for their staff and volunteers.

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## Thurrock: induction DVD

### **Why was a solution needed?**

Thurrock decided that they would use the common induction standards to develop an induction programme for all new employees to the children, education and families directorate.

A recent evaluation of the induction programme highlighted that:

- low numbers of employees returned induction paperwork
- members of the workforce wanted induction processes to be children's trust wide rather than just within the directorate

### **What solution was developed?**

Using part of the integrated youth services workforce grant, the directorate worked with colleagues in youth services to develop a method of involving young people in a new induction programme.

A group of young people worked with a film company to make a short film outlining what they wanted, expected and needed from members of the children's workforce. This was completed for each of the common induction standards as well as the directorate standards.

After watching the DVD, new employees are given a period of six months to evidence how each of the induction and directorate standards relates to their specific role, keeping the views of the young people in mind at all times.

### **Was is the desired impact of this solution?**

New employees are clear on what is required of them – in terms of standards and by local children and young people. The programme is now in use and pilots are underway in the third sector to test how the programme can be rolled out across the whole children's workforce.

---

## Blackpool: line managers support pack to embed integrated working

### **Why was a solution needed?**

Blackpool wanted to embed a true culture of integrated working across the whole of the children's trust. In order to do this it was felt that introducing methods of standardising the recruitment, employment and performance management cycle would support recruiting managers in bringing to life these day to day processes.

### **What solution was developed?**

Blackpool are in the process of developing a comprehensive line manager support pack that will guide managers through every element of the employee cycle including:

- copy for job adverts promoting a culture of integrated working
- information to be sent out to job candidates including the children's workforce values and behaviours (both within their own organisation and across boundaries)
- standard wording to be included in job descriptions and person specifications making expectations clear
- questions to be included in interviews to assess candidates' desire and ability to work in an integrated way across professional boundaries
- commitment to integrated working to be included in offer letters
- suggested objectives for performance management and appraisals which support and measure integrated working

### **What is the desired impact of this solution?**

The support pack will be developed on behalf of the Blackpool Children's Trust and implementation will take account of the whole children's workforce.

# Appendix 4: templates and guidelines for exercises

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## Template 1 Local workforce priorities

Exercise 1.1: workforce development priorities from the children's plan

Reference	Priority area / issue / initiative	Importance (high, medium, low)	Workforce implications / comments

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## Template 1

### Local workforce priorities

Exercise 2.3a: workforce development priorities from the local community strategy and local area agreement

Reference	Priority area / issue / initiative	Importance (high, medium, low)	Workforce implications / comments

---

## Template 1

### Local workforce priorities

Exercise 2.3b: workforce development priorities – interviews with sector leads

Reference	Priority area / issue / initiative	Importance (high, medium, low)	Workforce implications / comments

Sectors to consider are, for example: education, early years, health, justice and crime prevention, social, family and community support, sport and culture and the third sector.

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## Template 1

### Local workforce priorities

Exercise 2.3b: workforce development priorities – sector level plans, strategies and data

Reference	Priority area / issue / initiative	Importance (high, medium, low)	Workforce implications / comments

Sectors to consider are, for example: education, early years, health, justice and crime prevention, social, family and community support, sport and culture and the third sector.



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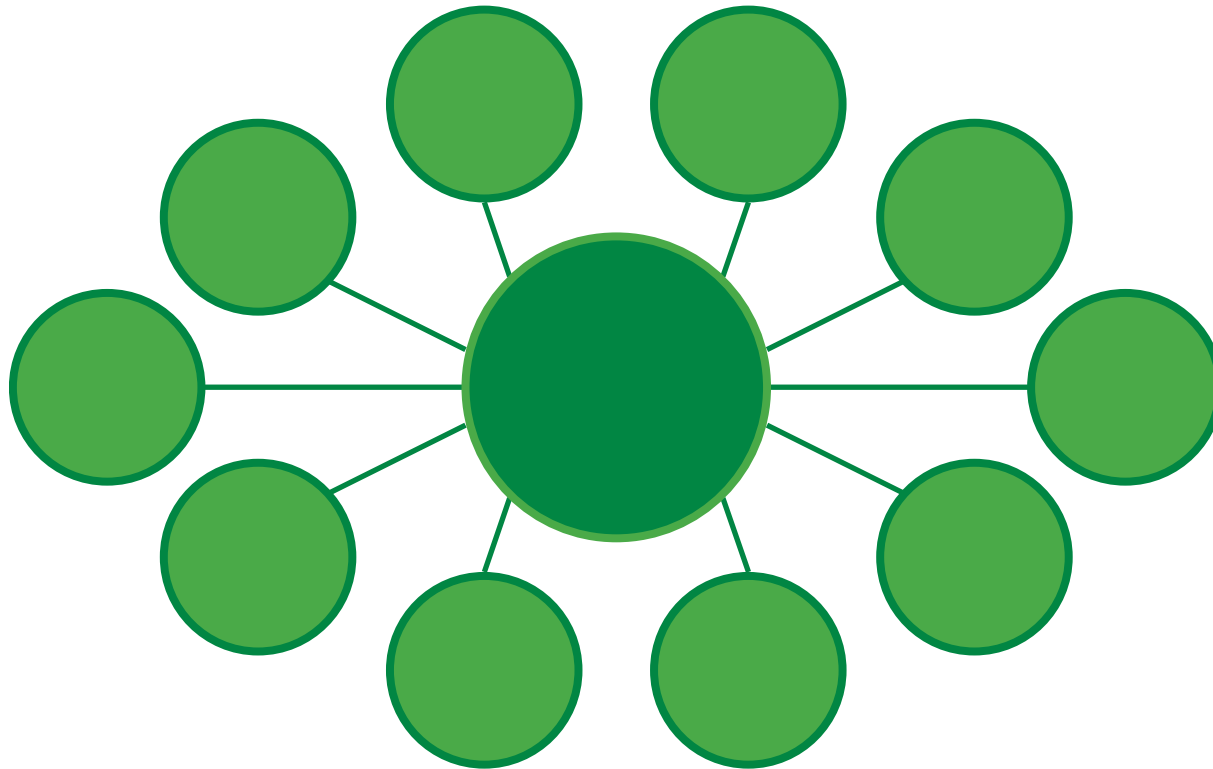
Template 1  
Local workforce priorities

Exercise 3.1: national and regional workforce development priorities

Reference	Priority area / issue / initiative	Importance (high, medium, low)	Workforce implications / comments

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Template 2  
Stakeholder map



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Template 3  
Workforce strategy project charter

**Project summary**

<b>Aim</b>	to... by...
<b>Overall approach</b>	- - - -
<b>Key milestones</b>	- - - -
<b>Resource</b>	- - - -

---

**People directly involved**

<b>Developer</b>		<b>Sponsor</b>	
<b>Overseeing</b>	(eg workforce development group)	<b>Governance</b>	(eg local partnership)
<b>Other project team members</b>	- - - - -	- - - - -	

---

### The scope of the workforce strategy

<b>Ambitions for the workforce strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– (ie what is hoped will be achieved through the workforce strategy activity</li><li>–</li><li>–</li><li>–</li><li>–</li></ul>	<b>Elements of the workforce strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– (ie what will be included or excluded from the workforce strategy</li><li>–</li><li>–</li><li>–</li><li>–</li></ul>
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### Key project objectives

<b>Workforce strategy objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– (ie the main achievements and activities planned)</li><li>–</li><li>–</li><li>–</li><li>–</li></ul>
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## Template 4 Stakeholder engagement plan

Exercise 4.4: identify which stakeholder groups to engage with and when

Stakeholder group	Aligning the strategy	Designing the strategy	Implementing and promoting the strategy	Sustaining the strategy
The workforce strategy developer/s				
The local children's partnership - members and subgroups – most importantly the:				
– workforce development group				
Director of children's services				
Other senior level sponsors within each sector or organisation				
Other actively involved senior level stakeholders such as:				
– strategic partnership board				

<b>Stakeholder group</b>	<b>Aligning the strategy</b>	<b>Designing the strategy</b>	<b>Implementing and promoting the strategy</b>	<b>Sustaining the strategy</b>
– <b>the local safeguarding children board</b>				
– <b>joint Commissioning Board</b>				
– <b>lead member for children’s services</b>				
– <b>other children’s workforce related councillors and politicians</b>				
<b>Actively involved HR or training managers, policy leads</b>				
<b>Commissioning leads</b>				
<b>Communications and marketing teams</b>				
<b>Staff – frontline and support</b>				
<b>Other leaders and managers</b>				

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Stakeholder group	Aligning the strategy	Designing the strategy	Implementing and promoting the strategy	Sustaining the strategy
Trade unions				
Associations and forums for voluntary and community organisations				
Children, young people, their families and carers				
– consultation and participation groups				



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## Template 5

### Gap analysis

Exercise 6.1: conducting a gap analysis, where are we now?

The rating scale and criteria should be developed by the group conducting this exercise to ensure common understanding of what they are and mean. A suggested approach is to use High, Medium and Low for Importance and for current status a scale such as: Not yet begun, struggling, average or midpoint, making progress and excelling.

Key workforce objective – where we aim to be	Importance (impact on ECM outcomes)	Current status	Comments regarding current position

---

## Template 6

### Action impact mapping

Exercise 6.3: mapping the likely impact of workforce strategy actions

**Part a:** The criteria for rating the actions should be discussed and agreed by the exercise participants. A simple rating could be high, medium and low.

Proposed workforce strategy action	Children's plan objective 1	Children's plan objective 2	Children's plan objective 3	Children's plan objective 4, etc



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## Template 7

### Assessing the impact of change

Exercise 6.5: assessing the impact of change

**Part a:** The criteria for rating the level of impact (such as high, medium or low) should be discussed and agreed by the exercise participants.

Description of change	Who will it impact?	Level of impact	Nature of impact	Pressure points	Actions

## Template 8

### Target audience groups

Exercise 7.2: assessing the needs of the target audience groups

Stakeholder group	How they use the workforce strategy document	Main areas of interest	Level of detail required	Preferred format and media	How we will meet their needs
The local children's partnership - members and subgroups – most importantly the:					
– workforce development group					
Director of children's services					
Other senior level sponsors within each sector or organisation					
Other actively involved senior level stakeholders such as:					

Continued

Stakeholder group	How they use the workforce strategy document	Main areas of interest	Level of detail required	Preferred format and media	How we will meet their needs
– strategic partnership board					
– the local safeguarding children board					
– joint Commissioning Board					
– lead member for children's services					
– other children's workforce related councillors and politicians					

Stakeholder group	How they use the workforce strategy document	Main areas of interest	Level of detail required	Preferred format and media	How we will meet their needs
Actively involved HR or training managers, policy leads					
Commissioning leads					
Communications and marketing teams					
Staff – frontline and support					
Other leaders and managers					
Trade unions					
Associations and forums for voluntary and community organisations					
Children, young people, their families and carers					
– consultation and participation groups					
The community as a whole					
The press					

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## Template 9

### Key internal factors

Exercise 9.1: identifying the key internal factors which could enable or block the implementation of strategy actions.

Key internal factor	Enabler or blocker	Degree of impact	How it could be leveraged / overcome
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-



---

## Template 10

### Team level impact assessment

Exercise 9.3: identifying the required tasks and likely impact of workforce strategy actions at team level.

Workforce strategy action	Tasks we are required to do	What changes we are likely to see for our team	Additional tasks and actions we will need to take
	—	—	—
	—	—	—
	—	—	—
	—	—	—
	—	—	—
	—	—	—
	—	—	—
	—	—	—
	—	—	—
	—	—	—




## Template 11 Project progress report

Exercise 11.1: project and action progress reporting.

		Stages of implementation						
	Action or project	Stage 1 (eg resourcing)	Stage 2 (eg designing)	Stage 3 (eg piloting)	Stage 4 (eg roll out)	Stage 5 (eg embedding)	Stage 6 (eg reviewing)	Comments
Strategic Theme 1	Project 1							
	Project 2							
	Project 3							
	Project 4							
Strategic Theme	Project 1							
	Project 2							
	Project 3							
	Project 4							
Strategic Theme	Project 1							
	Project 2							
	Project 3							
	Project 4							
Strategic Theme	Project 1							
	Project 2							
	Project 3							
	Project 4							

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**Copy and paste, then move into the box concerned:**

-  **Red:** a significant problem requiring the help of a sponsor
-  **Amber:** a delay or hiccup which the project team can resolve themselves
-  **Green:** everything running smoothly
- NYS:** Not yet started, as planned

Note: Stages of implementation could be replaced by Months or Weeks.

## Template 12 Risk register

Exercise 11.2: identifying and mitigating potential risks to the workforce strategy cycle

**Part a:** risk matrix

	IMPACT (most likely impact, if in doubt grade up, not down)				
Probability (likelihood of occurrence)	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
	1	2	3	4	5
almost certain	5				
probable (highly likely)	4				
likely	3				
possible	2				
rare	1				

HIGH – plan immediate action, MEDIUM – review closely, LOW – limited action, long term plans

---

**Part b:** risk register

Risk identification	Risk assessment (H,M,L)	Actions on risks	When to monitor next
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	

---

## Template 13

Exercise 10.4: gauging the impact of workforce development.

Action	Desired / planned impacts	Impact achieved so far	Evidenced by	Comments / further actions

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