

NDS Quality information pack

An NDS Quality Team Initiative

Induction



National Disability Services

Queensland

A message from the NDS Queensland Quality Team

The National Disability Services (NDS) Queensland Quality Team is part of NDS's Industry Development and Support activities. It was set up to support disability organisations to implement the new Disability Sector Quality System. The purpose of this information pack written by the NDS Quality Team is to stimulate discussion and debate amongst stakeholders of disability services in the context of implementing the Disability Sector Quality System — it is not intended as a definitive reference on the topic.

For example, this material may be used as a basis for stakeholder workshops or staff meeting discussions. It may also be adapted freely to meet the needs of any intended audience. It is requested, however, that NDS Queensland be acknowledged as the source of the material and that any modifications do not change the intent or compromise the integrity of the original document.

Information packs are also available covering the following topics:

- reviewing and developing policies and procedures
- recruitment and selection
- training and development
- networking, mentoring and peer support
- person-centred planning.

These can be downloaded from the NDS Quality website: www.ndsqldquality.net or you can contact NDS Queensland directly:

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The information pack

This information pack is one in a series designed to help organisations review aspects of management as part of implementing a quality framework. The pack includes a series of information sheets, related questions and a facilitator's session plan that can be used by groups to review current practice and identify improvements. The information sheets are intended to stimulate discussion — they do not go into detail about the topic. There are numerous books, resources, courses, Internet sites and experts that can provide detailed information; some of these are listed in the resources section at the end of the pack. Accessing more detailed expertise will become more important as you move further into review or begin making improvements to practice.

For the facilitator it will be important to familiarise and tailor the workshop to the group and the organisation. The organisation's policies, procedures and any other resources for each topic will be needed to supplement the information in this pack. Similarly if the organisation is using the disability service standards as part of this review each participant will need copies of the standards.

About the topic

The way a new staff member is introduced to the organisation and their role impacts on their future work performance. Having a carefully thought out induction process will help new staff members reach their potential as quickly as possible.

When a new staff member begins a job they are often at their most motivated and are open to learning and being influenced about how things happen. It is an ideal time to work with them to ensure they have the information and tools to fulfil their job requirements.

Induction is an investment in the future quality of your organisation's workforce — an induction process that provides consistent and current information helps to ensure future performance as well as help to:

- reduce turnover
- increase satisfaction
- reduce the number of safety incidents
- maintain service quality.

It is also important to periodically reflect on what impressions the organisation's induction gives new staff members and how well it meets their needs.

The contents

This resource will help you to review the way your organisation inducts new staff members and determine if there are any changes or improvements you can make. In this pack you will find information covering:

- benefits of induction and some assumptions to challenge
- obligations
- what is induction — what does it look like

- induction in focus (discussion questions)
- sample workshop design and facilitator notes
- other resources.

The information in this pack can also be used to consider how best to induct volunteers — these processes are often the same as, or a simplified version of, those used for paid staff. If you do use it in relation to volunteers please substitute 'volunteers' when reading the word 'staff'.

Benefits of induction and some assumptions to challenge



This sheet lists some of the benefits of, and assumptions about, conducting induction. Participants will probably be able to think of more of these.

Benefits

Some of the benefits of induction include:

- increased confidence of new staff members and shorter lead time to good performance
- opportunity to spend time with each new staff member and assess their job fit, skills, qualifications and development needs
- influencing the retention of staff and therefore reducing staff turnover (and by association the costs of recruitment and selection)
- influencing the service user confidence in staff
- greater consistency in service quality and smoother transitions between staff
- increased alignment with vision, mission, values, policies, and procedures
- a workforce with broader understanding of the organisation, the people who are involved and their roles
- an opportunity to influence cultural change
- taking advantage of the energy and enthusiasm of a new staff member
- potential for reduced exposure to future legal or workers' compensation costs
- potential for reduced error rates and complaints or grievances.

Some assumptions to challenge

Some of the common assumptions people have about induction include:

- there is no time for induction; we need staff on the ground straight away
- induction can be postponed with little or no consequences
- everyone here is too busy to do it and no one can be spared
- induction is only for direct service staff
- the new staff member has lots of experience — they don't need induction
- we don't have the time or skills to develop a good induction programme, let alone keep it current
- our staff turnover is so high we would be running induction too often



- there is too much that staff need to know, it would take too long
- we run regular training anyway; we don't need an induction process
- a staff member who has been working in the organisation for a while and changes role doesn't need an induction.



This information sheet is not meant to be a definitive list of the legislative or organisational obligations relating to induction. It is meant to highlight that there are some responsibilities that do need to be addressed by the organisation. If there are queries or concerns you can get more information directly from the legislation, standard or relevant governing body — it is important to be fully and accurately informed.

The disability service standards

The disability service standards are relevant to this topic (in particular *Standard 10: Staff recruitment, employment and development* and *Standard 8: Service management*). Having a clear approach to induction and implementing this in a consistent and transparent manner will help to demonstrate that the organisation meets these standards.

Other legislation

According to the industrial legislation, organisations are given a period of time in which to get to know a new staff member and gauge whether their appointment has been appropriate. It is essential to use this time to prepare a staff member for the role as comprehensively as possible. A good induction process will assist managers and new staff members to interact and understand the role requirements and ensure that they can fulfil the job requirements.

There are other pieces of legislation that govern the types of content that must be covered in the organisation's induction:

- **Workplace health and safety (WH&S) legislation:** one of the ways of meeting the obligations of employers in the WH&S legislation is to ensure that staff members have the information, knowledge and skills to fulfil their role safely at all times. The need to ensure that the staff member does not start in a role until they are aware of the safety issues of the role and the work location is critical.
- **Anti-discrimination legislation:** as an employer there are obligations under the various discrimination acts to ensure staff have an understanding of appropriate workplace behaviours at all times. Including this information in induction ensures that new staff members have this information before they start on the job.



Reducing exposure to risk

You can reduce your exposure to risk by ensuring that new staff members have:

- information about the work site, the workplace and the role before starting
- access to expertise to raise and resolve queries or issues.



A good induction programme is one that suits the organisation. There are many ways to conduct induction, however it is important that it conveys the vision, mission, values and the culture of the organisation.

Why do an induction?

The purpose of an induction programme is to introduce new staff members to the organisation and the role. It shortens the time that it will take new staff members to become fully productive in the role and can also impact on their satisfaction with the organisation and the role.

Often organisations are committed to induction, however, for one reason or another induction programmes are postponed or overlooked without thinking through the consequences.

In the longer term a good induction programme can positively impact on:

- turnover
- achieving service or organisational goals and performance levels
- meeting service standards and other obligations
- health and wellbeing
- complaints and grievances
- injury or safety incidents
- insurance and workers' compensation costs.

Staff turnover has long been an issue in the delivery of community services — in particular disability services. A good induction programme gives staff confidence in fulfilling their roles and addresses the risk and safety factors inherent in their day-to-day workplaces. This provides a positive base from which to deal with the demands of the profession.

Who is inducted and when?

All staff members benefit from an induction regardless of their role or type of employment — the emphasis of the induction may be different for each person but the process will be the same.

New staff members

A new staff member is usually one that is highly motivated and ready to learn — take advantage of this. Spending time with a new staff member when they first arrive in the organisation is the best chance of influencing them about the purpose and culture of the organisation and the expectations on them in their role.



Existing staff members

There will also be a component of induction for existing staff members who have changed roles. This will involve significantly less resources as there is no need to cover organisational information, only role-based information such as the:

- people they will be working with
- risks they may be exposed to
- routines of the role and type of working environment the organisation is trying to create.

What is an induction programme?

An induction programme is the process by which a new staff member or volunteer is brought into the organisation and provided with the information they require to do their job. How formal the programme is will differ between organisations, however within organisations the programme should cover consistent information about the workplace and each specific role.

The aim of an induction programme is to help a new person to become a productive and participative member of the organisation as quickly as possible.

The programme will usually have two parts:

1. **An organisational component:** this outlines the important aspects of the organisation that a new staff member needs to understand.
2. **A role component:** this focuses on what the person needs to know in order to fulfil their role.

Only the second component would be conducted for an existing staff member who is taking up a new role within the same organisation.

How do you conduct an induction programme?

Induction programmes can be set up in many ways, for example they can:

- be very unstructured and ad hoc to very structured;
- occur before a new person starts their job, at periodic intervals or gradually over time; or
- be done individually or within a group (either the whole programme or sections of the programme).

Deciding on an approach will depend on what the organisation wants to achieve and the type of organisation. There are costs and benefits of each approach.

The types of questions that will influence the approach may include:

- What is the workforce profile? (e.g. how many staff, where are they located, what type of staff are they, what times do they work)



- What is the service/organisational profile? (e.g. how much variety is there in the work, how is the service delivered, what types of professions are employed)
- How often are new staff members employed?
- Who can be involved in the induction programme?
- What resources are already available to be included in induction?
- What type of change is the organisation trying to impact? (e.g. change to culture, reductions in work injury rates, introduction of new technology etc.)

The answers to these questions will determine the structure of the programme (e.g. individual/group, held prior to starting/periodical/gradual).

The next step is to determine what to leave in and leave out. This can be difficult. Start with the questions:

- What information is so important that the staff member cannot do their job without knowing?; then look at
- What information should the new staff member know?; and lastly
- What would be nice for them to know?

Often there is too much information and you will need to compromise. An induction will often include telling new staff members where to find information rather than providing the information itself.

What types of induction materials are needed?

Compiling the materials is often the most resource-intensive part of developing a successful induction programme. Depending on how formal the programme is materials may include:

- checklists
- reading materials
- training sessions
- workbooks.

Often it is advisable to start simply with the materials that are already available within the organisation — the quality of the induction is not necessarily related to the sophistication of the materials.



Important note: The more complex the induction materials are, the harder it is to keep the content current.



What records are needed?

It is important to keep a record of who completed the induction programme and what was covered for that individual. There are times when these records are needed to demonstrate that a staff member has received an induction and that it covered the information that was relevant for that individual to be effective (such as in the event of performance issues or safety incidents).

How does the organisation know the programme is effective?

As with any training and development programme, induction will need to be evaluated. Staff members who have just completed their induction, as well as more established staff, will have valuable information about the induction process.

Below are some indicators of the effectiveness of the induction process:

- staff confidence
- knowledge of policy, procedure and performance standards
- sense of purpose and belonging
- staff satisfaction levels
- health and wellbeing of staff
- quality of service delivery
- absenteeism
- turnover
- safety incident levels
- workers' compensation costs
- levels of performance issues.

Maintaining the impetus on induction training can also be difficult. For this reason evaluating and analysing information on the above indicators will help to maintain the focus. Reviewing this data may lead to identifying improvements. The review and analysis process should involve people in the organisation who have, or need to have, a strong commitment to induction.

These questions aim to help organisations understand how induction works in the organisation and what might need to change. To get the most out of these questions locate a copy of the organisation's induction policy/procedure (if one exists) and read the '*What is induction — what does it look like?*' information sheet before answering them.

How it happens now...

- Describe how induction happens here.

- What works really well about the way it happens here?

- What impression does this give of the organisation?

How it relates to what we want to achieve...

- How does this relate to what is written in our policy and procedure documents or if none exist what we want to achieve?

- How does this reinforce our vision, mission and values?

- In what ways does this not reinforce our vision, mission and values?

How can we better align 'how it happens now' to 'what we want to achieve'...

- What could we do to improve the way it works here?

- What could we do to better align the way it happens here with our vision, mission and values?


Sample workshop outline — induction


Information for facilitators


This section of the information pack provides a sample workshop and two activities which can be used if groups are not committed to induction or if you don't have enough information about how the organisation's current induction process works. For more information on how to conduct the workshop refer to the *Tips for facilitators* information sheet.

To prepare for the workshop make sure all participants have access to at least the *Induction in focus* discussion questions and the information sheet on *What is induction — what does it look like?*

You may wish to include induction of volunteers in your review. With a few alterations this session can include both staff and volunteers or you can run separate workshops using this sample outline.

Time	Suggested questions & prompts	Actions	
	<p>Welcome and introductions</p> <p>Introductions</p> <p>Ask participants to introduce themselves and add a word or phrase to describe the best induction process they have experienced?</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>To review the effectiveness of the induction programme for staff.</p> <p>Alignment question</p> <p>In this workshop/meeting/in-service, we are seeking some alignment (everyone being on the same page) not necessarily agreement on all points.</p> <p><i>Note: To assist with this, ask: 'How can we be more aligned as a group?'</i></p>	<p>Write up the response and refer to as needed to keep group on track.</p>	
	<p>Overview of the session</p> <p>In this session we will be sharing our thoughts about induction in this organisation with the aim of evaluating its effectiveness. To do this we will work through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ reminding ourselves of the business are we in ▪ sharing our reflections about the induction process ▪ sharing our thinking about the information on <i>What is induction — what does it look like?</i> and our related obligations 		

Time	Suggested questions & prompts	Actions	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> discussing what this means for how we induct new staff and decide what do we want to change (if anything). 		
	<p>What business are we in?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit the organisation's vision, mission and values. Ask participants how this relates to induction? 	Group discussion (large or small groups).	
	<p>Sharing our reflections from the discussion questions</p> <p>What are the steps in the organisation's induction process as it happens now?</p> <p><i>Note: use the feedback activity if needed</i></p> <p>Ask each participant to share what impression the induction process gave him or her about the organisation.</p> <p><i>Note: use the commitment activity if needed</i></p> <p>As a group discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What gives us confidence that the current induction process correctly conveys our vision, mission and values? What would increase our confidence that the current induction process correctly conveys our vision, mission and values? 	<p>Group discussion with facilitator recording the steps.</p> <p>Record this discussion.</p>	
	<p>Discussing 'what is induction — what does it look like?'</p> <p>Discuss people's thoughts around the information on 'What is induction — what does it look like?' and our obligations around induction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was surprising? What was new information? 	Group discussion.	
	<p>Where to from here</p> <p>Recap on the themes that came from reflections and discuss these in light of the information sheet 'What is induction — what does it look like?'</p> <p>What do we want to change in the way we induct staff?</p> <p>What is the priority, the benefit and the resources</p>	Write up an action plan, indicating the priority, which person is to be responsible and when. Include a review date.	

Time	Suggested questions & prompts	Actions	
	required of these actions?		
	Conclusion		
	<p>Review the discussions held and summarise the actions agreed.</p> <p>Ask: 'Is there anything that you wish to change or add?'</p> <p>Explain how and when the group will get feedback on what happens next (ideally within two weeks of workshop).</p>		
	Thanks and acknowledgements		

Activities

The following activities can be used during the workshop if needed. We have suggested where they could be used, however you may need to introduce them at different stages depending on your situation.

Commitment activity

If there is a concern about the commitment to induction use this activity:

1. get a rough agreement on staff turnover rate (how many people you hire in a year divided by the number of staff you have)
2. get an estimate of the average worker's annual base salary cost
3. multiply that cost by 30% and do again for 250%
4. multiply the result by the turnover rate
5. somewhere in that range is the cost of staff turnover for your organisation.

Formula:

$$\text{Turnover rate} = \frac{\text{no. of people hired per year}}{\text{total number of staff}}$$

$$\text{Cost of staff turnover} = \text{Avg annual base salary} \times 0.3 \times 2.5 \times \text{turnover rate}$$

Feedback activity

If there is not enough information about how the induction process happens at the moment ask participants to go out and interview staff with the following questions and then rejoin the group to share and discuss:

- Describe your induction process?
- What did that tell you about this organisation?
- How could induction have been improved?



Please note: If you are holding the workshop out of work hours you may need to make sure you have done this activity beforehand.

The following tips aim to help facilitators conduct the workshop provided in this information pack.



Important note: The session plan has been written assuming that people from the same workplace (or organisation) are working together on the issue and how it pertains to their organisation. The session plan will need to be altered if this is not the case.

Preparation

- Provide pre-reading information with enough time for the participants to digest it and have a chance to ask questions before the session begins. The pre-reading information will include the information sheets from this information package, the disability service standards and any policy/procedural information that is relevant to the topic.
- Gather information about the room, food, timing and travel requirements of the participants prior to organising the session and venue.
- Familiarise yourself with the session materials and if necessary adapt them to the group's characteristics and experiences for example: break into smaller groups for discussions or activities; think about the time you have for each activity and mark these on your workshop plan in the time column; allow time for extra activities if needed; or use two facilitators if working with a large group).
- Consider covering the associated costs for participants with disabilities e.g. transport, childcare, attendant carers etc.

During the session

- Take care to validate all contributions.
- Be flexible with timing and frequency of breaks. Aim for a break every hour. Allow more time for breaks if the interactions during these breaks are flowing freely (relationship building is the best outcome and worth sacrificing time spent on workshop content).
- Don't start by knowing the answers — participants will pick this up. The intention is to explore the possibilities, not confirm solutions you have already identified.
- When you are recording discussions make sure you label the information as you collect it to make the collation after the session easier.
- Keep an eye on all participants and their level of interaction; follow up with any individuals who may not be fully participating to see if there is any assistance that could be provided to increase their level of involvement.

After the session

- Always thank and acknowledge all participants (including staff) and those who helped organise the session.
- Make sure feedback is provided within two weeks of the workshop (be realistic when you give a timeframe at the end of the workshop).

Tips on conducting the sample workshop

Introductions

- The introduction part of the workshop can be altered to suit the group and the facilitator. The activity listed in the session plan is designed to warm people up to the topic, be a non-threatening sharing activity and to make sure everyone is aware of who is in the room. If people do not know each other you may wish to spend more time on this to ensure all participants are comfortable.
- You may agree on some ground rules for the session. If so these should be recorded and remain in sight of the group throughout the session.

Alignment activity

- This activity is about creating a good atmosphere for the group to work with each other on the session tasks. It is worth spending as much time as is required on this activity before progressing. The outcome will have a huge impact on whether the group will achieve the purpose of the session.
- The alignment discussion is designed to identify individual perspectives and how this will affect the work of the group. The more strongly aligned, the easier it will be to attack the workshop topic.
- One of the keys to successful group work is having an environment where there can be debate, questioning, curiosity, enquiry, disagreement and agreement around the topic at hand without personal agendas preventing all the issues being discussed.
- If people do raise significant concerns about whether they can work together you will need to facilitate a discussion to explore this. If this takes up the entire session the outcome will still be worthwhile.

Overview of the session

- Check with the participants about whether this meets their expectations and spend time clarifying and agreeing on how you will be spending the rest of the session.

What business are we in?

- This activity is designed to provide the context for the discussion. If there is disagreement on the vision, mission and values stop the session and discuss this issue. Agreeing on the vision, mission and values is vital for any of the work outlined in the session plan.

The next few activities (reflection and discussion)

- These require people to have read the pre-reading. If this has not happened you may need to give people time to individually read the information.

Where to from here

- This activity is the planning part of the session. Your role as a facilitator will be to ensure this is recorded and test out the feasibility of the plan. The plan needs to be owned, resourced and be reasonably practical to achieve.
- This write-up is able to be used as evidence of review of practice for the service audits; ensure the documentation is appropriate.

The information contained in this pack will not provide enough detail for more in-depth work on improving induction programmes. The following list of resources is not exhaustive, however it is a useful place to start.

- *Internal publications:* many of your existing internal publications will provide information to new staff members about how the organisation operates and what is expected of them.
- *Other organisations' publications:* many disability organisations face the same safety and risk issues and collaboration may be useful
- *Commercial publications:* there are commercial/government publications about disability and the disability sector which will help in inducting new staff members to the sector
- *Ready 4 Work:* this is a website that has publications for guides for teachers and employers and, in particular, a guide for new workers which can be purchased through the site: www.readyforwork.sk.ca
- *Disability Services Queensland (DSQ):* DSQ Template in the DSQS — Resources & Guide.
- *DSQ Workforce Planning Toolkit:* Issued in hardcopy to all services and is available on the internet in more detail at www.disability.qld.gov.au (or follow the workforce planning and toolkit links)
- *Australian Business:* this site contains a resource about induction: www.australianbusiness.com.au
- *Business Bureau UK:* a small business resource site with a page on induction: www.businessbureau-uk.co.uk (or select staff induction from the 'personnel' drop down list on the home page)
- *Australian National Training Authority:* a resource for diversity in training: www.westone.wa.gov.au/workingwithdiversity
- *Swinburne University of Technology:* an induction checklist: www.swin.edu.au/corporate/hr/induction/checklst.pdf
- *University of Technology Sydney:* an induction checklist for supervisors and managers: www.hru.uts.edu.au (follow the 'Starting at UTS' and 'Induction' links)
- *Australian Human Resources Institute:* www.ahri.com.au
- *Australian Institute of Training and Development:* www.aitd.com.au
- *CCH Human Resource Management — CCH Australia Ltd:* this is a subscription service which is free of charge: www.cch.com.au
- *Australian Standards:* this web site publishes a range of standards and guides to assist managers in a whole range of processes: www.standards.com.au/catalogue/script/search.asp



Please note: These resources were current at the time of publication, however some website addresses or page links may change without our knowledge.