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One Minute Guide: A 'Learning Organisation'

What is a learning organisation?

A learning organisation is one that has a strong learning culture that promotes openness, creativity, sharing and space to try new things and learn from mistakes.

What are the characteristics of a learning organisation?

- There are shared values, vision and objectives.
- Effective information and communication is in place.
- Service user feedback and participation is actively sought, valued and used to inform practice and strategic development.
- Research and learning from audits, complaints, serious case reviews is used to inform practice.
- Team working is embedded which makes the best use of all staff skills.
- Cross-organisational and collaborative working is a common feature.
- Learning and development activities are available to all, including mentoring, coaching, shadowing, and staff are encouraged to participate and also share their own knowledge, skills and experience with staff.
- Reflection is a key part of supervision/one-to-one meetings.
- Leadership and specialisms are a feature in all levels of the organisation, not just with managers.
- Problems are 'owned' rather than referred on.
- Every activity is seen as a learning opportunity and capacity for change is present.
- Loyalty to the organisation and between staff is commonplace.

What does it feel like to be part of a learning organisation?

- When things go well your good practice is recognised and celebrated.
- When things don't go as well as they could, you can depend upon being given constructive feedback as soon as possible, focusing on the positive and solutions. This will encourage self-appraisal and offer alternatives.
- Your views will be actively sought and valued and if your suggestions can't be taken forward, you will receive an explanation as to why.
- You will feel that you have all the necessary support systems and "tools" in place should you need them. In a learning organisation it should be consistent across the service.

- When 'good practice' is recognised it is promoted and rolled out across the service.
- Conversations often focus on what is going well rather than only what has gone wrong.
- You will feel that you are developing and being supported to do so.

How is Children's Services a learning organisation and encouraging a learning culture?

Children's Services have developed as a learning organisation by embracing the messages from [The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report - A child-centred system \(May 2011\)](#) particularly developing the characteristics set out in 7.11 (page 108) around what an effective local system should have.

The background and vision is set out in the [Redbridge Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy 2011 - 2014](#):

"Redbridge will lead the way as a learning organisation in developing a learning culture across partners that will ensure we attract, develop and retain a highly motivated, aspirational, diverse workforce, which is responsive to the needs of children, young people and their families and carers."

Who are the key players?

A 'learning organisation' is one that involves all levels of staff and management. All staff should be able to relate to the Children's Services strategic plans, such as the CYPP, and their own Service Area Plan.

Achievements So Far

- Adoption of a new tag line *"Redbridge Children's Services - Doing the right thing for children and young people"*.
- Stakeholder Events e.g. Early Intervention Seminar 2012 which include consultation and promote a shared vision across Redbridge.
- Provision of independent mentoring for social workers across the Trust.
- Development of a Children's Services Evidence Informed Practice Strategy and Workforce Development Strategy to provide guidance on the direction of travel.
- Best practice workshops that seek to ensure good practice is free to develop and grow.
- Development of the Voice of the Child Group to champion the views of children and young people.
- Children's Services Staff Feedback Forum and Outlook 'mailbox' (CSStafffeedback@redbridge.gov.uk) – available to all staff to provide feedback, suggestions and ask questions.
- Development of group supervision across the Children's Trust to support case management and reflection;
- "New Ways of Working" Pilots in CPAT, CLAFH and CRC Ray Lodge that are trail blazing increased direct work with children, young people and families.
- Social worker 'Health' Checks in 2011 and 2012 which inform change.

- Investment in research resources by membership of [Research in Practice \(RiP\)](#), [Making Research Count \(MRC\)](#), and [Community Care Inform \(CCI\)](#).
- Introduction of feedback forms for services users to inform Workforce Development.
- Celebration of success and achievements of staff via the CS Staff Recognition Scheme and CASCADE.
- A thriving Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) Programme for Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWS).
- A rating of 'Good' across all areas in the [Redbridge Ofsted Inspection Report](#) (October 2012) where it was noted that "strong learning culture is in evidence" (paragraph 48, page 14).

How can I contribute towards developing our learning organisation?

There are so many opportunities for staff. These include:

- joining in with one of the regular group meetings to provide your contribution e.g. Voice of the Child, Best Practice Workshop, Children's Services Staff Feedback Forum etc.;
- enquire about workplace 'shadowing' either within Children's Services or with one of our partner agencies e.g. Health, Probation, voluntary groups;
- ensure that you take the opportunity to read the notes of the various meetings such as PRIG, Social Work Transformation and Management team meetings so that you are kept up to date with developments; which will be on the internal calendar.
- volunteer to 'buddy' the next new member of staff that joins your Team;
- make suggestions for new One Minute Guides (OMGs) to support learning and information sharing;
- be prepared to share your learning and any resources provided at training courses with your Team in order to CASCADE learning;
- take an active part in your Team Meetings so that they become a useful point of exchange of information, support and feedback;
- encourage children and young people looked after to access Viewpoint and provide us with their feedback and those subject to a CP Plan to seek advocacy support at Conferences;
- find out who has access to Community Care Inform in your Service and take advantage of the wide range of guidance and research material available on line;
- check out the Research in Practice Learning Events calendar and e-learning modules available – particularly those on Evidence Informed Practice;
- avail yourself of the opportunities made available to you through the CS Learning and Development Programme, the LSCB Training Programme and the NE London Learning and Development Partnership Joint Training Programme;
- consider becoming a Practice Educator and contributing to supporting a Social Work student by offering a placement in Redbridge.

How do I get more information on any of the above?

By sending an e-mail to workforcedevelopment@redbridge.gov.uk. The Team will advise you or link you to the relevant contact.