

Unit A52 Manage internal communication and consultation processes

Unit Commentary

Summary

Communication and consultation within the local authority – with elected members and colleagues – is necessary, both to review existing arrangements and to take forward new initiatives with the confidence that they will enjoy a high level of support.

This unit outlines the following elements:

1. **Establish and promote processes for internal communication and consultation**
2. **Communicate and consult with individuals and groups internally**

Each of these elements is described in greater detail on pages 82 – 83, with criteria for competent performance. The member of staff must show relevant evidence for each of these if they are to be deemed competent in this unit. They must also show that they have the knowledge and understanding listed on page 84.

Target Group

This unit is appropriate to the work of staff in local government working, for example, in Committee Services, Democratic Services, Member Services, Scrutiny or other departments who have a leading role in consulting within the local authority on key issues relating to democratic and decision making structures and procedures or services to its elected members.

Linked units

This unit is closely linked with units A11 and A12 and could also be relevant to A53 and A61.

Element 1: Establish and promote processes for internal communication and consultation

Performance criteria

You must always make sure that:

1. you select internal communication and consultation **processes** that:
 - are consistent with the aims, objectives and values of your organisation
 - are consistent with your reasons for communicating and consulting
 - are the most effective methods of communicating and consulting within available resources
 - meet the needs of the **people** you wish to communicate and consult with
 - take account of other communication and consultation processes within the organisation
2. you develop and document plans for communication and consultation **processes** that show:
 - the **methods** to be used
 - timescales and costs
 - the people involved and their contribution
 - critical success factors
 - possible contingencies and ways of dealing with these
3. you explain your plans to relevant **people**
4. you seek their feedback and amend your plans accordingly

Range

- a) You must select three of the following communication and consultation **processes**:
 1. existing
 2. new
 3. formal
 4. informal
- b) for communicating and consulting with all of the following **people**:
 1. team members
 2. colleagues
 3. higher level managers
 4. elected members
- c) use two of the following **methods**:
 1. paper-based
 2. involving meetings
 3. using information technology

You must, however, show that you could cover the full range shown above.

Element 2: Communicate and consult with individuals and groups internally

Performance criteria

You must always make sure that:

1. you implement the communication and consultation **processes** as planned
2. you collect and collate all feedback in a way that will help analysis
3. you analyse the feedback objectively
4. you provide a clear summary of the results
5. you identify conclusions and recommendations that are consistent with the results of your analysis and the purpose of the consultation
6. you report on the consultation clearly and logically, making sure your report is consistent with your organisation's requirements
7. you observe requirements for confidentiality, political independence and sensitivity
8. you evaluate the effectiveness of the consultation against its critical success factors and identify possible improvements for future practice

Range

- a) You must implement three of the following communication and consultation **processes**:
1. existing
 2. new
 3. formal
 4. informal

You must, however, show that you could cover the full range shown above.

Required Knowledge and Understanding

In order to achieve best practice in this unit, the member of staff will need to know and/or understand the following:

For the Whole Unit: Generic Knowledge and Understanding

- K1 the importance of effective communication and consultation within organisations
- K2 the range of processes and methods available for communication and consultation
- K3 the strengths and weaknesses of these processes and methods according to different situations and different groups
- K4 how these processes and methods can be used effectively within a local authority
- K5 the importance of confidentiality, political independence and sensitivity when carrying out consultation exercises within the local authority

For the Whole Unit: Knowledge and Understanding Specific to the Local Authority

- K6 the established methods of communicating and consulting within the local authority and their strengths and weaknesses
- K7 individuals and groups that should be communicated and consulted with according to the range of issues within the candidate's area of responsibility
- K8 house styles and local requirements for report writing

Knowledge and Understanding Specific to Element 1

- K9 how to identify internal communication and consultation processes that are appropriate to your needs
- K10 the importance of devising methods of communication and consultation that meet the needs of the people involved and how to do so
- K11 why you should take account of other communication and consultation processes within your organisation
- K12 why you should plan and document your communication and consultation process
- K13 why you should consult with others on your plans
- K14 why it is important to identify and plan for possible contingencies

Knowledge and Understanding Specific to Element 2

- K15 how to organise data in a way that will help analysis
- K16 why it is important to be objective in your analysis and factors that may tend to make you less than objective
- K17 how to set out a report in a clear and logical manner
- K18 the importance of continuous improvement in communication and consultation processes