

## Action Learning Set Guidance

This brief Guidance outlines North Cumbria CCG's process for supporting Staff who are Registered Practitioners via an action learning approach.

### Key components:

- A problem (urgent, significant, complex, relevant, without an easy solution)
- An Action learning team (diverse, with diversified experienced, selected by predetermined criteria)
- A process of insightful questioning & reflective listening
- An action taken on the problem (initiated and implemented by the group)
- A commitment to learning (learning is the ultimate goal, not merely finding a solution)
- An Action Learning Coach (facilitator, enabler, support,)

### Participant's Rules:

- Take responsibility of your learning and actions;
- Collaborate with other members;
- Listen actively, telling people if you have problems in understanding;
- Be honest and open to yourself and to the other members;
- Keep the details of what was discussed during the set confidential;
- Speak for yourself without generalizations;
- Respect everyone's right to speak or not to speak;
- Make statements only in response to questions;
- Ask questions;
- Commit to the process

### Facilitator's Role:

- Create a safe space where to have honest discussions;
- Remind participants of the methodology of the set and keep the discipline;
- Model helpful questioning;
- Be a good listener;
- Draw attention to the issues of process;
- Be conscious of time;
- Follow the same rules as the participants, since he/she is not there to take decisions for the others;
- Ask key questions especially at a point when intervention is necessary (e.g. participants get stuck, there is a need for clarification, a good learning opportunity);
- Promote ongoing reflection;
- Sense and navigate the emotions of the participants in order to achieve the desired results effectively

## **Frequency**

- Minimum of 6 monthly or as requested by the group
- To agree planned or open nature of session
- Agree in advance facilitator for each session
- Keep a brief record of the participants and discussion

## **Before the Meeting**

- For open sessions each participant has to think about the work-based issues he/she would like to bring into the set and to agree on setting aside all the time that will be necessary.

## **During the Meeting**

- As the meeting starts, the facilitator should explain to the participants the ground rules and the basic principles of the Action Learning Sets
- One participant then has the opportunity to an “airtime”, introducing the issue to be shared with the others. This is composed of two parts:
  - ✓ The first one is an uninterrupted speech where the person has to outline the issue.
  - ✓ The second part is a question and answer session that involves all the other members of the meeting.
- Once the “airtime” is over, the person presenting the issue is invited to give feedback to the group on the way he/she experienced the process and what were the lessons learned.
- The person presenting the issue should also make a commitment to a specific action to take, according to the suggestions and the various behaving possibilities discussed with the other participants.
- The “airtime” is then given to other members of the set, trying to leave space to as many participants as possible.
- Before closing the meeting, an agreement on the logistic details of the following meeting should be reached.
- All the following meetings will start dedicating some time to the people that discussed their issue in the previous set, asking them to report back to the group on their actions since the last meeting.

## Additional Information

### **Revan's Essential Questions**

Questioning is the key process in Action Learning – it is where fresh ideas or questioning insight comes from.

When considering their problem or issue, each person should think about the following questions:

- What am I trying to do?
- What is stopping me from doing it?
- What can I do about it?
- Who knows what I am trying to do?
- Who cares about what I am trying to do?
- Who else can do anything to help?

### **Brief for an Action Learning Problem**

Here are six questions to help you think through a suitable problem, opportunity, or issue, for work in an Action Learning set:

1. Describe the problem or issue in one sentence:
2. Why is this important?
  - a) To you?
  - b) To your organization?
3. How will you recognize progress on this problem?
4. Who else would like to see progress on this problem?
5. What difficulties do you anticipate?
6. What are the benefits if this problem is reduced or resolved?
  - a) To you?
  - b) To your organization?

**Appendix One: Recording Template**

DATE:
VENUE:
TIME:
Participants:
Actions Agreed/Feedback:
Additional Comments: