

How to get your message across



**Effective
implementation
of policy**

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Effective implementation of policy



Purpose: These guidelines aim to support Policy Authors in the effective planning and implementing of new or revised policy documents and communicating the policy intent

Context: When developing or reviewing policy documents, it is important to consider the intent of the policy, its intended audience and how you plan to communicate the policy intent effectively to the right people.

There are many different approaches to implementing a new or updated policy. Communicating change in a large and complex healthcare system can occur using mediums such as announcements, emails, letters, fact sheets, intranet posts, meetings, online learning modules and face to face training.

To choose the best option requires careful assessment, planning, consultation and implementation. Each option should be weighed up according to its demand on the health service or staff, resources required, cost and time.








Figure 1: Development and/or review of policy documents process. NB: This table is a helpful guide but not an exhaustive checklist.

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Idea Generation	Key Activities	Key Deliverables
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scan for legislative change(s) • Scan for Australian or international standard change • Identity consumer or stakeholder concerns • Identity costs to services • Seek approval for funding changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project plan • Concept documents
Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence for change • Investigate legal implications • Take into account stakeholder considerations • Assess impact on business systems and processes and how these might be managed • Investigate technology options where required • Assess need to communicate intended changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review • Stakeholders report • Product review and statement of need
Business Analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a cost-benefit analysis • Identify resources required and capital expenses • Design and implement technology where required • Anticipate risks and mitigation strategies • Investigate technology options where required • Identify stakeholders for the communication strategy • Identify gaps in knowledge and required change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business case • Stakeholder and Communication strategy
Develop Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the communication strategy and/or education plan • Draft the policy document • Develop policy implementation documents (to assist staff to comply with a policy) • Road test or pilot if necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy document • Pilot report (optional) • Training plan (if required) • Communication Products (FAQs, procedures, guidelines, diagrams, and other supporting documents and materials)
Go Live 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the communication and marketing strategy • Collateral designs • Launch date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product launch plan

Guidance for Policy Authors

Process map





Step 01



Determine the intent

Before starting an initial draft, you must define the requirements for a new or updated policy document, you should first ask

‘What is the intent of the policy document?’

The intent and its overall scope should be stated explicitly.

Examples include:

- Is it to communicate best practice in an area?
- Is it to communicate information contained in an Australian Standard?

PD2016_049 NSW Health Policy Directives and Other Policy Documents provides further information about what to consider before developing a policy document.

Step 02



Identify your target audience

Before starting an initial draft, you must clearly identify your target audience. By identifying your target audience, you ensure they receive and understand the policy intent and requirements.

Examples include:

- All staff (which would include staff within all NSW Health entities, including the Pillars and the NSW Ministry of Health)
- A subset of staff (e.g. all nurses and midwives)
- Clinical or non-clinical staff, or both
- A particular clinical area (e.g. all staff who work in Maternity Services)
- A particular area of exposure (e.g. all staff who may be involved in preventing or responding to workplace violence incidents).

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Step 03	What outcomes are you trying to achieve?
Outcome 1 Staff are aware of and have read and understand the policy document	<p>There are three main outcomes that a policy document can achieve. The required outcome will determine the most appropriate communication levers to use.</p> <p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring staff are informed of particular processes, procedures and systems so they can be compliant, e.g. revised incident management approach. <p>Communications Options</p> <p>As per standard approach for communicating new or updated policy document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policy documents are published in the Policy Distribution System• Organisations as identified by the Policy Author are notified via email when the policy document is published• Quarterly newsletter circulated advising of policy documents published in the past three months• Policy documents distributed by NSW Health Organisations to relevant facilities, units and services.
Outcome 2 Knowledge transfer to staff	<p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applying new or updated or refresher to help staff do their job, e.g. hand hygiene procedures. <p>Communications Options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The standard approach for communicating new or updated policy documents (as detailed above). PLUS appropriate communication products, such as a fact sheet.
Outcome 3 Behaviour change by staff	<p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring staff understand the importance of the new or revised knowledge/information.• Ensuring staff can apply the policy requirements in their work environment, e.g. hand hygiene results in more staff washing their hands before interacting with a patient.• Involves critical thinking, problem solving and/or demonstrating a procedure <p>Communications Options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The standard approach for communicating new or updated policy documents (as detailed in (1)). PLUS additional education options.• Options include fact sheets, Guideline, Standard Operating Procedure, handbooks, films and videos, simulation, lectures, online education modules or face-to-face training.• To achieve competence, consider whether mentorship or clinical supervision is available to deliver behaviour change interventions.• Consider whether the outcome can be achieved by on-the-job learning. This includes coaching, mentoring, job shadowing, job instructions, case study methods and role playing.

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Policy documents may have a mix of Outcome 2 and Outcome 3, e.g. the policy requires skills transfer regarding the correct hand washing procedure and aims to drive behaviour change so that staff are washing their hands more.

If Outcome 2 or Outcome 3 have been selected, follow Steps 4 to 7. Otherwise the policy document should be distributed as per the standard communications procedure, with no further action required.

Step 04

What is the impact of the policy?

When developing or updating a policy document, it is important to understand the impact of the policy. Some considerations may include:

- What actions do staff need to undertake to achieve the desired outcomes?
- Do you need to engage champions to achieve the intended behavioural change?
- What are the policies or processes already in place (if any), and how are their roles and functions related to the new policy document? Have you assessed how they might impact your intended outcome(s)?

Step 05

Is there evidence of a knowledge or behaviour gap?

In order to implement the policy effectively policy authors need to identify if staff have an existing gap in their knowledge/skills and/or behaviour.

- Evidence of this is critical because addressing a potential gap through education and training involves a significant commitment of time and resources by substantial numbers of staff.
- Only consider training as an option if it is both educationally achievable/best practice and cost effective. This includes being able to demonstrate the intended outcomes, such as staff behavioural change or skills transfer will take place.
- If there is no evidence of a gap, then the policy author should consider changing the desired outcome to Outcome 1, in Step 3 above, so that staff need only read and be aware of the policy document.
- If there is robust evidence that a gap exists, this must be documented. You will need to draw on this evidence in Step 6 when consulting with the educational design leaders in NSW Health to determine the most appropriate levers to impart the knowledge, skills or behaviour change to the target audience.



Step 06

How can the gap in knowledge or skill be addressed?

This step requires the policy author to investigate about the best approach to closing the identified gap in skills, knowledge or behavioural change interventions.

The Health and Education Training Institute (HETI) is the educational design expert for NSW Health and should be contacted for advice about education. Advice on the most appropriate education design options should be sought at the initial stage of policy development to address the gap in knowledge or skill. As part of the process of considering education design options, you should reflect on the following:

- Training in isolation does not lead to effective behaviour change in staff. Transfer of knowledge/skill and behavioural change occurs more effectively in an environment that supports application to practice.
- Any education programs targeted at 'All NSW Health Staff' carry huge cost and are a challenge to Health Agencies who have to find the time and backfill to support staff in completing the education.
- Health professionals have a responsibility to undertake continuing education and development to maintain currency of practice. Therefore any proposed education requirements should consider these existing professional responsibilities and not impose a further burden.
- There is a rigorous process for approval of any proposed essential education. The NSW Health Mandatory Training Standing Committee (MTSC) oversees standards for Mandatory training in NSW Health. Further information is contained in PD 2016_048 Mandatory Training - Criteria for Approval as a NSW Health Requirement.



Step 07

What is the implementation plan?

Once you have an agreed approach to communicate your outcomes, the final step is to determine how the approach will be implemented.

It is crucial that the implementation approach considers a Communication Plan. This should include:

- Communication objectives
- Audience and stakeholders
- Key messages, including the benefit to patients, staff and the organisation
- What communication products will be developed, what channel they will use, when they will be rolled out and who is responsible for them
- Risks and their mitigations
- Any other supporting information.

Language used to communicate to staff should be simple and easy to understand, and should be targeted to the intended audience.

Evaluation Plan



Evaluation tells you if you are on the path to success and when you have arrived. By routinely evaluating your policy document, you will be able to get an insight into the impact of the policy and allow you to adapt or change the content or the approach.



Appendix 1

Behavioural Insights 'EAST' framework





EAST	Behavioural Insight	Description
Make it EASY 	Harness the power of defaults	We have a strong tendency to go with the default or pre-set option, since it is easy to do so. Making an option the default makes it more likely to be adopted.
	Reduce the 'hassle factor' of taking up a service	The effort required to perform an action often puts people off. Reducing the effort required can increase uptake or response rates (and can use in reverse if want to make it more difficult to do something e.g. to reduce criminal activity!)
	Simplify messages	Making the message clear often results in a significant increase in response rates to communications. In particular, it's useful to identify how a complex goal can be broken down into simpler, easier actions.
Make it ATTRACTIVE 	Attract attention	We are more likely to do something that our attention is drawn towards. Ways of doing this include the use of images, colour or personalisation.
	Design rewards and sanctions for maximum effect	Financial incentives are often highly effective, but alternative incentive designs — such as lotteries — also work well and often cost less.

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Behavioural Insights 'EAST' framework



EAST	Behavioural Insight	Description
Make it SOCIAL 	Show that most people perform the desired behaviour	Describing what most people do in a particular situation encourages others to do the same. Similarly, policy makers should be wary of inadvertently reinforcing a problematic behaviour by emphasising its high prevalence.
	Use the power of networks	We are embedded in a network of social relationships, and those we come into contact with shape our actions. Governments can foster networks to enable collective action, provide mutual support, and encourage behaviours to spread peer-to-peer.
	Encourage people to make a commitment to others	We often use commitment devices to voluntarily 'lock ourselves' into doing something in advance. The social nature of these commitments is often crucial.
Make it TIMELY 	Prompt people when they are likely to be most receptive	The same offer made at different times can have drastically different levels of success. Behaviour is generally easier to change when habits are already disrupted, such as around major life events.
	Consider the immediate costs and benefits	We are more influenced by costs and benefits that take effect immediately than those delivered later. Policy makers should consider whether the immediate costs or benefits can be adjusted (even slightly), given that they are so influential.
	Help people plan their response to events	There is a substantial gap between intentions and actual behaviour. A proven solution is to prompt people to identify the barriers to action, and develop a specific plan to address them.

[1] Service et al., 2014. EAST Four Simple Ways to Apply Behavioural Insights. [online] Available at: <https://www.behaviouralinsights.co.uk/publications/east-four-simple-ways-to-apply-behavioural-insights/> [Accessed 10 Sep. 2018].

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