

Developing your workforce

A people-centred approach

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Introduction

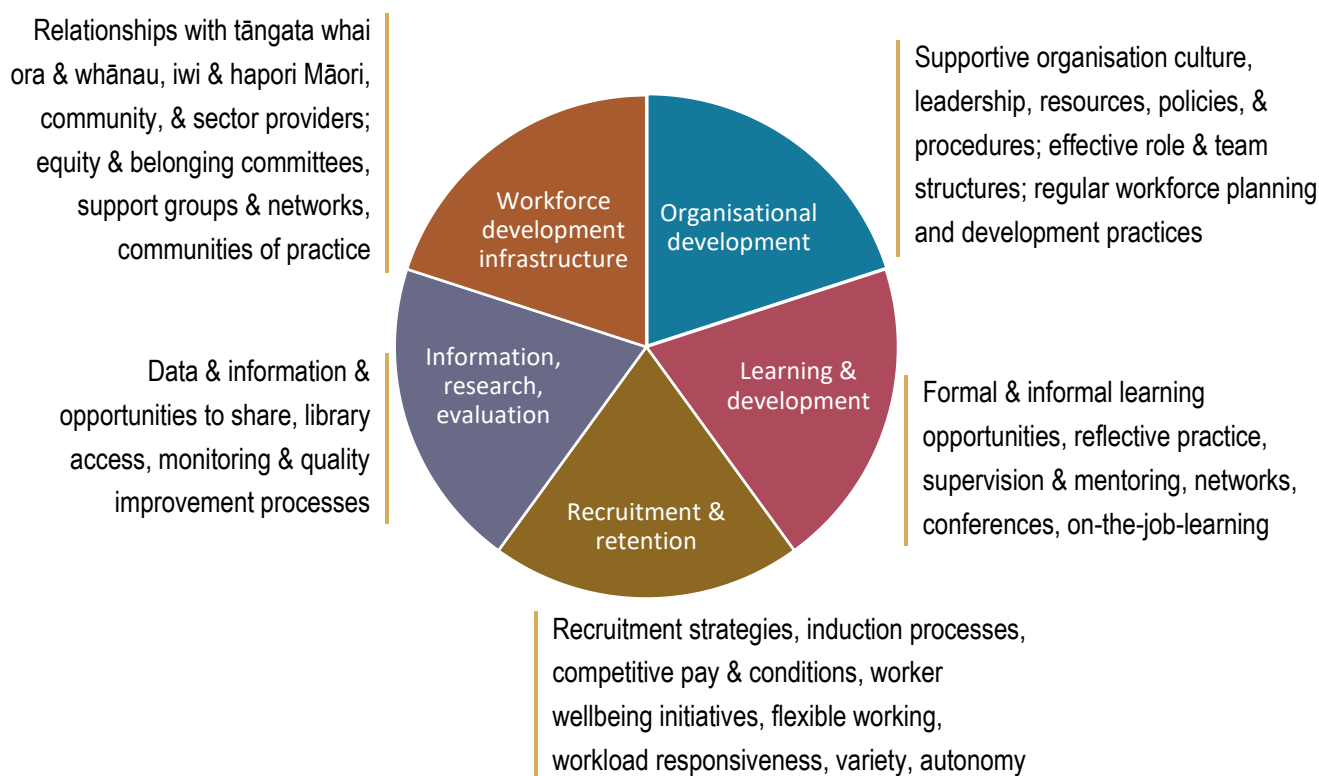
This guide is for leaders and managers in the mental health and addiction sector. It presents a people-centred approach to developing your workforce. The guide steps through a process for selecting, planning, and delivering development activities in ways that inspire and sustain people's confidence and commitment to the desired change.

For those new to workforce development, we suggest focusing on aspects of the process that you can do well and over time building the resources and confidence to do more. This guide assumes a reasonable knowledge of project management practices.

The following advice builds on our [Strategic Planning for Workforce Development](#) guide, which can help to determine your organisation's strategic workforce goals, if these are not clear already. More information is available on the Te Pou website or email us at workforce@tepou.co.nz

What is workforce development?

Workforce development is any activity that supports employees (kaimahi) to better deliver services. It is more than training and recruitment. Workforce development includes a wide range of activities, such as building organisational culture and policies, growing and shaping kaimahi skills and abilities, fostering kaimahi wellbeing and job satisfaction, integrating new skills and technology, and enhancing internal and external relationships. The diagram below outlines various examples across five key areas, with more detail provided in the Appendix.



A people-centred approach

Workforce development activities are more successful and effective when these are designed around people's needs, appeal to their hearts and minds, and inspire collective ownership of, and commitment to, the desired change.

The process in this guide focuses on people who lead workforce development, who are involved in activities or influence others' perceptions, and those who are impacted by changes to the workforce and service delivery. These include organisation kaimahi and leaders, tāngata whai ora and whānau, and others.

The guide describes a four-step process illustrated below, informed by peoples' views and needs. Collaborating with people at each step helps them to feel safe, supported, and confident they have the knowledge and resources needed to embrace new behaviours and practices.



Success will be enhanced by an organisation culture of openness, responsiveness, and transparency around workforce development. Such a culture is fair and equitable and encourages open participation before, during, and after workforce development activities.

Step 1: Select the right activity

This first step identifies your organisation's readiness for workforce development and who will lead, be involved, influence, and be impacted. It gathers information to help select activities that are the right fit for your organisation's goals and kaimahi, tāngata whai ora, whānau, and community.

Readiness for workforce development

Ask: do you have a good understanding of the vision and goals for workforce development? If not apparent, then consider establishing these first with a [workforce planning](#) process.

The following questions can help to clarify these factors.

- ☐ What is the goal(s) for workforce development?
- ☐ Why is your organisation dissatisfied with the current state?
- ☐ How does this goal link to organisational strategies and plans?
- ☐ What change is needed to achieve the goal and create a new future state?

Identify options

Look at a range of activities available to your organisation. Think beyond training or recruitment to consider other activities like reflective practices, networking, and relationships like tuakana/teina mentoring approaches (see Appendix for more examples). The following are some key questions to consider when selecting workforce development activities.

- ☐ What are the existing or potential future workforce gaps?
- ☐ Does something new need to be done, or is something else already underway that can be adapted?
- ☐ What are the consequences of doing nothing?
- ☐ What kinds of activities are available to fill those gaps?

Understand what people want and need

Taking your activity options to tāngata whai ora and whānau, hapori Māori and community leaders, kaimahi, and organisation managers and leaders helps you to understand their expectations. Use suitable engagement methods for each audience, for example wānanga, focus groups, interviews, team meetings, surveys.

Some useful questions to consider are below.

- ☐ Who are the key groups that will be involved in or impacted by workforce development?
- ☐ Who leads these groups and who are the people with influence?
- ☐ How can you best engage with each group about workforce development opportunities, for example wānanga, focus groups, kaimahi surveys?
- ☐ What do you already know about their views and what are your knowledge gaps?
- ☐ Ask them, what would they value most from workforce development?

- ☐ What can they tell you about the possible risks and barriers to success from their point of view?
- ☐ Can they identify any factors that will improve the likelihood of success?

Activity selection

Consider the option(s) best aligned with people's expectations and organisation values and goals. To finalise selection, ask, is the activity:

- ☐ well supported by evidence and aligned to sector and organisation goals
- ☐ able to deliver the benefits your community, kaimahi, and organisation aspire to achieve
- ☐ the right fit for your organisation, kaimahi, tāngata whai ora and community, for example in terms of culture and values
- ☐ able to be supported by the organisation leadership at all levels
- ☐ available within suitable timeframes, locations, and budget
- ☐ adaptable to suit local cultures, values, and challenges
- ☐ sustainable over time
- ☐ achievable within the available investment and resources?

If substantial change is required, it can be helpful to consider a series of activities that can be enacted incrementally.

Know and state 'why'

Use the information you have gathered to build a compelling case for your selected activity. This is based on your engagement with kaimahi, tāngata whai ora, and others and understanding of the current state and the organisation's future goals.

For example:

Tāngata whai ora say they want to receive peer support services from people with lived experience. Kaimahi also report these roles would help improve services. The organisation goal is to develop new peer support roles and form a team with peer-led management. Some kaimahi who identify with lived experience are interested in training for these new roles and there is funding available to recruit as well. The first activity is to develop resources for new roles like job descriptions and practice guidance. Other activities will include training, followed by recruitment to the team. This series of workforce development activities will meet tāngata whai ora and whānau needs, provide lived experience support for other kaimahi, and can be sustained with a mix of new and updated contracts.

Carry your compelling case forward into the next steps. This helps people feel connected and invested in the activity and to understand the good reasons for it. As a result, they are more likely to accept and embrace the activity.

Step 2: Plan its delivery

A workforce development activity's likelihood of success is enhanced with thorough planning that considers how you will:

1. roll out each stage of the activity
2. build people's confidence and commitment to the activity before, during, and after its delivery
3. understand what success looks like.

The following sections summarise key steps for planning the activity and how to ensure that people have the best possible experience at each stage.

Team and resources

Build your activity or project team with clear roles and responsibilities. Contract in experts if needed and practical. For example, a team might include:

- ☐ people leading the overall strategic direction and resourcing, like a project sponsor
- ☐ people responsible for the activity development and delivery, such as an activity or project lead and team members like kaimahi and content experts, people with lived or living experience, consumer and cultural advisors, coordinators and administrators
- ☐ champions, who are influential people already committed to the change
- ☐ representatives or advisors from kaimahi, organisation leadership, tāngata whai ora, and community groups who can provide peer review.

Ensure the team has the necessary evidence and resources to deliver the activity. For example, developing new peer support roles within a peer-led team can be informed by [He arataki ki ngā kaimahi mātau ā-wheako: A guide to the consumer, peer support, and lived experience workforce in mental health and addiction settings.](#)

Engage and prepare leaders

Strong and active leadership is crucial to workforce development success. Seek the commitment of key leaders across different levels of the organisation and prepare them to act as role models for the activity and the intended change. Include senior managers, line managers and team leaders, as well as influencers like content experts, advisors, and experienced and respected kaimahi.

Start by communicating your compelling case for change. Then engage with leaders to build their knowledge about the activity and confidence that they can support it relevant to their position and relationships. Some questions to guide your actions include:

- ☐ who are the formal and informal leaders of those people who will be involved in and impacted by the activity

- ☐ what do leaders need to know about the evidence informing the activity to feel confident supporting it in their context, for example how can line managers fit the case for change into their meetings with kaimahi and teams
- ☐ what do leaders need to know about change processes, so they support others through any challenges with implementation, for example who to talk to about concerns or problems
- ☐ how will you communicate with people in this group and who can they talk to about the activity when they need help?

Activity plan and review

A workforce development plan sets out the steps of the activity, when these will occur, who will be responsible, and outlines what will be said and done to support success.

The first draft of a workforce development plan should consider the following (a [template](#) is available online).

- ☐ The compelling case for change and its benefits for tāngata whai ora and whānau, kaimahi, the organisation, and the wider community.
- ☐ How the plan links to people's expectations, and organisation goals and priorities.
- ☐ How best to reflect culture, diversity and inclusion, and build strong relationships and engagement.
- ☐ The resource needs including people, financial and other resources.
- ☐ A preliminary assessment of risks and barriers and how to overcome these.
- ☐ Expected steps, timeframes, outputs, and outcomes.
- ☐ The data, process, and evaluation measures that will support monitoring and evaluation for progress, impact, and outcomes and how these will be collected.

Process for implementation

Add to the plan the messages, actions, and resources specifically designed to support people who lead, are involved or influence, and impacted by the activity, at each stage.

Before the activity begins, how will you build people's understanding and commitment to it? Use your compelling case to grow people's awareness about why the activity is needed, its benefits and goals. Some questions to consider are:

- ☐ what will build people's knowledge and confidence about the activity
- ☐ how will you inform people about how to engage with the activity and team
- ☐ what will encourage people to view the activity positively and want to participate in it, for example ask people what they are most excited about and what they think is needed
- ☐ how can you create feedback loops so people can see and feel that the organisation is responsive to their views and needs?

Include in your activity plan the resources, leadership, and other factors that promote people's commitment to and enhance their experience of the activity. For example, updating or developing new policies and procedures, contracting expert advice, and resourcing opportunities for discussions in internal and external meetings.

Start a communication plan to ensure the right messages are sent by the right people and be sure to allow for interactive feedback and engagement. For example, including communications in organisation newsletters and workplace noticeboards, providing line managers with information to discuss in kaimahi meetings.

Review

Seek review of the first draft of your plan from people who will be involved in or impacted by the activity, like kaimahi, organisation leaders, and tāngata whai ora. This provides opportunities to test the team's assumptions about the activity and identify specific risks and barriers. Some useful questions to ask of reviewers include:

- ☐ what is most appealing about this activity and why
- ☐ what will be difficult about this activity for you
- ☐ what would you need in place to make it work for you
- ☐ is the activity going to give you what you think you will need
- ☐ is there anything else you think needs to be considered?

Responding to people's feedback in your plan will support its success. For example, if some kaimahi say that the activity does not sufficiently provide for their specific knowledge needs, then add additional resources and actions into the plan to address this gap.

Step 3: Action delivery

When you are ready, start actioning your activity plan. During each action, continue to make sure the environment is supportive, so people involved and impacted have a positive experience. With each action, there should be:

- ☐ visible leadership and support for positive participation in the activity
- ☐ regular open and transparent communications that support kaimahi to see the activity as a valuable opportunity with relevance to their work
- ☐ access to the necessary information, resources, and tools
- ☐ opportunities for people involved and impacted to feedback on the activity, so that unforeseen challenges can be addressed quickly
- ☐ data collection to inform monitoring and evaluation, for example what actions helped the activity to succeed?

Regularly checking in at each stage helps to understand how kaimahi and others are responding. As new knowledge emerges, update the plan to address gaps and areas for improvement. This is especially important for sustaining the activity's impact after completion.

Step 4: Sustain the change and evaluate

After the activity, how can you support kaimahi to embed and sustain the change into their practice, and promote positive experiences for tāngata whai ora and whānau? Some examples follow.

- ☐ Reinforce learnings in regular work plans and conversations, for example at team meetings, in workplan goals, and with reflective practice opportunities.
- ☐ Gather and respond to feedback from kaimahi, tāngata whai ora, and others.
- ☐ Provide time and resources for kaimahi to share their experience to inform others and champion the change.
- ☐ Provide access to relevant reflective practices such as professional supervision, coaching, mentoring, networking opportunities and communities of practice, and refreshers if available.
- ☐ Recognise, reward, and celebrate success.

Evaluation can help to identify what went well and what can be improved.

- ☐ Analyse data collected to understand feedback from before, during, and after the activity.
- ☐ Evaluate outcomes and communicate results.
- ☐ Ask, what could be done differently for future activities?
- ☐ Carry your learnings forward into future workforce development activities.
- ☐ Celebrate successes! Remember to thank everyone who contributed.

Appendix: Example workforce development activities

Depending on your organisation's goals, some of the following workforce development examples may be relevant.

Area	Activity examples
Organisational development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Te Tiriti o Waitangi-based policies and practices – Supportive values-based organisation culture and leadership, policies, and practices – A learning and development focused organisational culture – Effective team structures – Investing in communications, feedback and goal setting practices – Change leadership knowledge and skills and dedicated workforce development champions – Role development, role clarity, and kaimahi deployment practices – Regular and intentional planning and development reviews
Recruitment and retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Equity-focused recruitment strategies – Effective induction processes – Competitive remuneration, benefits, incentives, allowances – Worker wellbeing initiatives including supportive and reflective management practices, workload monitoring and responsiveness – Flexible working arrangements – Workplace and task variety, complexity, and kaimahi autonomy
Learning and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Building cultural safety knowledge and skills – Kaimahi engaged in tuakana/teina relationships – Reflective practice, supervision, coaching, and mentoring – Access to communities of practice, networks, study groups – Membership with professional associations and networks – Attendance at conferences, seminars, and workshops – Formal and informal education and training, flexible online learning – Job rotations, secondments, project work – Kaimahi professional development retreats
Information, research, and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Access to data and information, including guidelines for cultural and other practice – Workshops and information sharing opportunities – Library access, shared access to reports, databases, newsletters – Monitoring, quality improvement, and evaluation practices
Workforce development infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Relationships with other providers, external groups and networks – Supportive workplace environment and service delivery practices – Equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging committees and policies – Kaimahi support groups and networks