



Aged Care Leadership Development Companion Guide

August 2014



VERSION 1

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Australian Government

Department of Industry

*This project has been produced with the assistance of funding provided by the
Commonwealth Government through the Department of Industry*

Aged Care Leadership Development Project

The Aged Care Leadership Development (ACLD) Project was established in July 2012 to determine leadership development requirements for the Aged Care industry through engagement and consultation with stakeholders. The project is led by strategic partners Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council (CS&HISC), Aged and Community Services Australia (ACSA) and Leading Aged Services Australia (LASA). The Project was supported by funding from the Department of Industry.

In June 2013, the Project delivered the *Aged Care Leadership Development Strategy*.

In March 2014, the Project delivered the *Australian Aged Care Leadership Development Framework*.

In December 2014, the Project plans to deliver the *Aged Care Leadership Development Portal*.

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Introduction

Purpose of this Guide

The purpose of this Guide is to assist Aged Care providers, particularly those in small-to-medium-sized enterprises with limited access to relevant expertise, to design, procure or conduct work that will attract, support and develop capable leaders for their organisations.

Who is this Guide for?

Users of this Guide are likely to be:

- CEOs and senior leaders of small-to-medium Aged Care service providers
- Human Resources and Learning/Organisational Development personnel working in Aged Care
- Others with an interest in leadership development.

The Aged Care Leadership Development Portal

The Aged Care Leadership Development Portal will be developed in the near future. This portal will contain helpful tools for leadership development, including:

1. The Australian Aged Care Leadership Development Strategy
2. The Australian Aged Care Leadership Capability Framework
3. Links to endorsed providers of Online Leadership Capability Review tools
4. Mentoring Program Design Specification
5. Mapping of Australian Aged Care Leadership Capability Framework to relevant qualifications.

The portal and associated tools have been developed to support the *Aged Care Leadership Development Strategy*. The *Strategy* identified that capable leadership is vital for meeting

the challenges faced by provider organisations and for the continued sustainability of the Aged Care industry. The *Strategy's* strategic vision is to revolutionise the way Aged Care leaders are developed and supported to succeed, by:

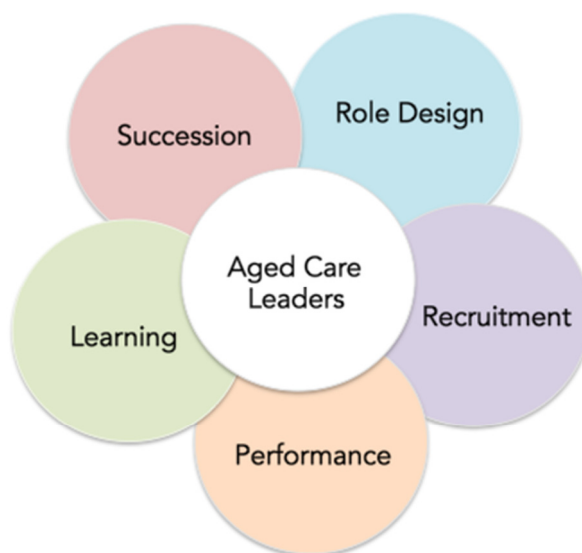
- raising the profile of leaders and leadership in the Aged Care Industry
- lifting the confidence, capacity, flexibility and adaptability of leaders across the sector through the provision of practical, sustainable and future-focussed development opportunities for leaders at different levels
- informing and guiding planning and decision-making concerning investment in leadership development and applications for government funding of recommended leadership development initiatives
- making a tangible and positive contribution to the broader recognition of the professionalism and value of the sector as a whole.

What's inside this Guide?

This Guide shows how tools available from the Aged Care Leadership Development Portal can assist with five key activities associated with attracting, developing and retaining capable leaders in Aged Care.

The five key activities are:

1. Role design
2. Recruitment
3. Performance
4. Learning
5. Succession



For each area, this Guide provides:

- a description of the activity and its importance and relevance to Aged Care
- approaches and tools to guide the design, procurement or conduct of the activity
- informative and inspiring stories from other Aged Care providers (see Industry Stories) .



Role Design

What is the leader's role within the organisation?

What is expected of the person in that role?

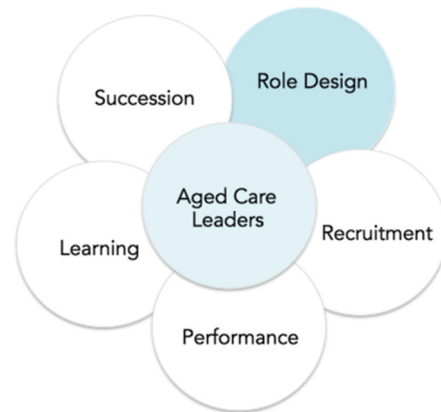
What attributes does the leader need to succeed in the role?

Role design answers these important questions. It's an essential first step for identifying the requirements of a position and its relationship to other roles in the organisation.

Role design is also an ideal place to consider how new ideas and approaches to leadership in Aged Care can be incorporated into work. This is a great opportunity to review the prevailing assumptions about what leaders do in the organisation and the capabilities they need to do it.

Many organisations, in Aged Care and elsewhere, fall into the trap of appointing a person with a high level of technical expertise to a leadership position, without ensuring the person has the appropriate leadership capabilities. While many experts become excellent leaders, the strategic nature of leadership and the demands of maintaining and delivering technical excellence can be a challenging mix. Expectations that one person will excel across both areas may warrant careful consideration.

Aged Care providers who acknowledge these challenges are now reshaping leadership roles. Successful alternatives include working partnerships between clinicians and manager-leaders or the creation of separate yet complementary clinical and management-leadership roles.



Why is good role design important?

It helps your organisation operate effectively

The way your organisation is structured can help, or hinder, your workers' ability to fulfil the organisation's purpose. A sound organisational structure and a shared understanding of the relationships between roles in that structure make role design possible. Roles that are carefully designed to support the delivery of sustainable, great service help set your organisation up to operate effectively.

It makes expectations clear

People are able to contribute most effectively when they know what is expected of them, and of others, in their organisation. All too often, organisational surveys report that lack of role clarity is a major contributor to job dissatisfaction. A clearly documented and agreed understanding of the requirements of every role in your organisation is not just good practice, it can make a significant contribution to individual success and organisational harmony.

What can help?

Before attempting to define a role, be sure that the *context* for the role is sound, by asking, for example: Is this role essential? Does it need to change? Does the role deliver what we need now and in the future? Stand back far enough to see if there are adjustments to the organisational structure needed first. Don't dive into the details of role descriptions without clarity and agreement on the organisation's structure and role relationships.

The output of good role design is a job/position/role description that clearly describes:

- the context of the role within the organisation – why the role exists
- all reporting relationships for the role
- key accountabilities of the role
- capabilities required for effective performance of the role – use the *Australian Aged Care Leadership Development Framework* for ideas here
- any technical or other professional requirements of incumbents.

Each role description for your organisation will necessarily contain information specific to your organisation. However, the *Australian Aged Care Leadership Capability Framework* can help you consider the role requirements in a number of ways. For example, the *Framework* can provide:

- a reference and a prompt for discussing and identifying the capabilities required for leaders in your organisation
- essential and preferred leadership capabilities required for a role
- an indication of the differences between *levels* of leader, to help you consider the level of leader required for a role



- assistance in considering the balance between leadership and management capabilities required by the role. The balance between management and leadership capabilities will vary for leaders at different organisational levels. In general, roles with a strategic focus will emphasise leadership capabilities and a roles with an operational focus will emphasise management capabilities.

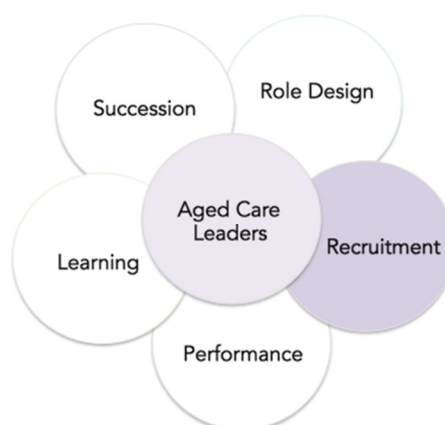
Remember that the *Framework* contains a wide range of capabilities, some of which will be more, or less, relevant to your organisation and the leadership role in question. Consider identifying a few specific capabilities as essential to the role and perhaps a few others as preferred, or desirable. It is unrealistic to expect anyone to be fully capable across all capability domains.

Recruitment

How can we attract and recruit quality candidates for leadership roles?

What should we look for?

How do we ensure best fit for our organisation?



Attracting and recruiting capable leaders to Aged Care is important not just for individual organisations but for the industry itself.

Expanding the pool of quality leaders in Aged Care will raise the profile of leaders and leadership within the sector while contributing to the increased professionalism and value of the industry as a whole.

Why is effective recruitment important?

You'll employ the best person for the job

Recruiting the right person for a leadership role can improve team effectiveness, build employee engagement, improve productivity and enhance organisational and community relationships as well as contributing new ideas and approaches to other leaders in your organisation.

It avoids costly consequences

Not infrequently, recruitment processes and decisions are less than ideal. The consequences of rushed or sloppy recruiting can be very costly over the longer term. These include:

- wasted time and effort recruiting an unsuitable employee
- time spent dealing with an underperforming leader
- unplanned training and support required from peers and management
- negative affect on the performance or morale of other workers within the team or department
- damage to community and other stakeholder relationships, and your organisation's reputation.

What can help?

Successful recruitment involves attracting and selecting the person who best fits both the role *and* your organisation. Attracting and recruiting the right people is easiest when there is clarity about the:

- requirements of the role (see Role Design)
- purpose and values of your organisation.

All opportunities and materials used to attract and select potential candidates should explain and/or reflect these important aspects. This ensures alignment between what you are advertising and what is happening internally within your organisation, and is most likely to yield the best results.

The *Australian Aged Care Leadership Capability Framework* can help your organisation to attract and recruit suitable leaders by:

- offering new leaders and industry newcomers an understanding of the broad expectations leaders and leadership in Aged Care
- providing inspiration for interview questions based on capabilities essential to your organisation
- providing a reference for useful words to include in job advertisements.

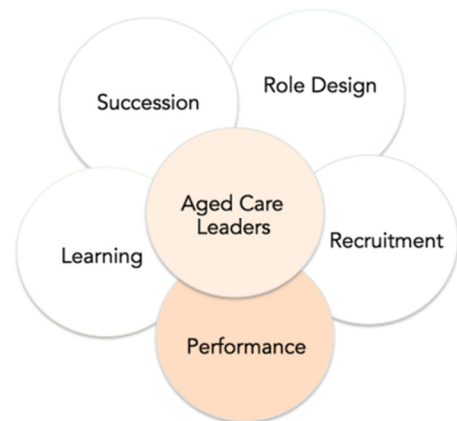
In addition, the *Online Capability Self-Review* tool may assist candidates to reflect on their aptitude for a role based on the capability 'profile' for the position. Outcomes of the self-review could then become an input to interview discussion.



Performance Review and Development

How can performance excellence be encouraged and supported?

What helps people to perform at their best?



Performance review and development is a systematic approach involving a range of activities to guide and encourage the best performance from people, to achieve organisational objectives and individual goals.

Performance review and development involves a continuous cycle of goal setting, monitoring progress against goals, evaluating outcomes and recognising performance. Performance development only works if supported by effective communication skills, particularly when giving and receiving feedback.

While accreditation reviews and meeting other compliance requirements are part of normal operations for many aged services providers, introducing performance review and development processes may be challenging, if people are not used to regular discussions about their performance and development requirements.

Performance review and development usually involves a regularly scheduled meeting to discuss performance against agreed goals and behaviours. The outcome of performance discussions is recorded in a performance review document and informs the development of plans in areas where improvement is needed. This assessment also forms the basis for regular, ongoing feedback and discussion outside of the formal review process.

Why is performance review and development important?

Reduce the time spent guiding team members or putting out fires:

Performance review and development helps team members understand what is expected from them, helping them to work more independently. Regular performance meetings can clarify roles, identify and address performance issues before they become problems, and build the skills and confidence of team members.

Reduces risks and improves productivity: Effective performance review and development helps to identify and remove barriers to performance. In a health setting, performance review and development are an important part of an organisation's clinical governance framework. The activities help people know what they should do, provide a plan for them to do it, review the outcomes of the plan, and see where they can improve.

Support the organisation's operational and strategic directions: By aligning and reviewing individual performance goals against the goals of a team, a function and the entire organisation, performance review and development helps to plan and coordinate people's work effectively.

What can help?

The *Aged Care Leadership Capability Framework* can help establish the foundations for performance review and development activities by informing role descriptions, leadership goals and other measures that are important inputs for performance review and development.

The *Aged Care Leadership 360 Degree Review Tool* can help gather feedback to inform performance review and development activities, by compiling feedback from peers, direct reports and supervisors on each relevant leadership capability.

Some guiding principles for performance review and development

- **Focus on 'how' as well as 'what':** Performance reviews should focus on not only on 'what' is achieved but 'how' things are done, by describing observable behaviours. Supervisors and team members can use the behavioural indicators in the *Capability Framework* as benchmarks for assessing performance in the role during the review period, and for determining the current and ongoing development needs of individual employees identifying specific behaviours – how an activity is to be performed, rather than just the final outcome. For example, achieving productivity targets while alienating team members with aggressive behaviour isn't sustainable. Achieving productivity targets by planning, directing and creating a supportive and encouraging environment for team members is likely to pay far greater dividends.
- **Prepare and communicate, or don't bother:** Performance review and development without adequate performance planning and communication between supervisor and team member is, at best, a waste of time, and at worst can be damaging.



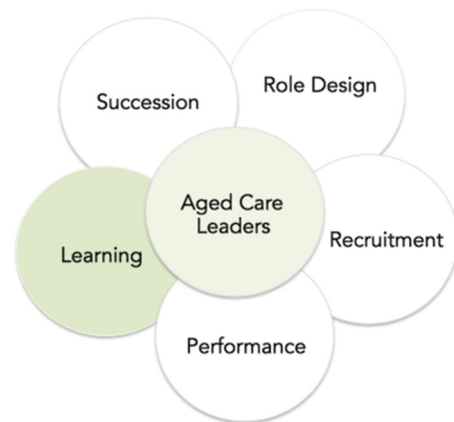
- **It takes two:** Performance review and development is not something that gets done **to** team members, it's done **with** them. It must occur in partnership with the team member. Supervisor and team member work with each other to assess performance identify barriers and plan to overcome them together.
- **No surprises:** There should never, ever be surprises when it comes to performance reviews. By the time a supervisor and team member sit down to discuss performance, both should know what's on the other's mind. Regular communication and the ability to give and receive feedback effectively ensures that surprises don't derail or take valuable time from a performance review meeting. Regular communication is best done informally, doesn't have to involve paperwork and can happen anywhere. Team members can't read minds, and may not know whether they should be doing something different, unless you let them know promptly and appropriately.
- **Forms and processes don't improve performance, people do:** Regardless of how the results and conclusions of a performance review or a development planning session are recorded, what matters is the ability of both parties to manage their working relationship successfully, communicate effectively and focus on making performance review and development planning a joint effort.
- **Feedback must be specific:** To improve performance, team members need feedback that is as specific and objective as possible. If feedback is too vague, general or subjective, the process is likely to do more harm than good. Supervisors need to ensure they spend sufficient time observing how their team members work, and gathering information from various sources.

Learning

What do Aged Care leaders need to learn?

How can we be sure that a learning program or activity is worthwhile?

How will my organisation get best value for money in developing its leaders?



The *Aged Care Leadership Development Strategy* provides a blueprint for supporting and developing capable leaders across the Aged Care sector.

The *Strategy* can help guide wise investments in leadership development while increasing the range of high quality learning opportunities for leaders working in Aged Care.

Why is effective learning important?

It builds capability and confidence: When learning is effective people develop capabilities that the organisation needs, and they build confidence in themselves. This benefits individuals and the organisation, while enhancing working relationships with our direct reports, peers and supervisors.

It enables high performance: People with skills and knowledge appropriate to their role are then ready to contribute effectively to the aged care service provider.

It challenges us to grow: Most of us have found ourselves the unwitting victim of a dull, irrelevant or fad-based training program. Such experiences tend to make us wary, but they also help us recognise what effective learning is not. It's not about flashy presenters peddling their wares, it's not about endless PowerPoint slideshows and it's not about cramming in 'everything you need to know about...' in a day. In fact, learning is rarely quick or easy. And that's because real learning involves change.

The most worthwhile leadership learning initiatives will be those that accommodate and support individual and organisational needs and preferences while developing relevant leadership capabilities.



What can help?

Self-Review and 360° Review Tools are available to assist individuals and organisations to assess their leadership capabilities using the *Australian Aged Care Leadership Capability Framework*.

The *Aged Care Leadership Development Strategy* provides a blueprint for achieving the strategic vision outlined and addressing the development needs of Aged Care leaders in the context of the current and future challenges faced by the sector. The development activities recommended as part of the *Aged Care Leadership Development Strategy* are:

- Mentoring
- Leadership Programs
- Coaching
- Leadership Resources Toolbox

Recommended learning activities should be designed to support Aged Care leaders to develop capabilities identified in the *Australian Aged Care Leadership Development Framework* as relevant to individual and organisational needs.

The recommended characteristics of each are provided following.

Mentoring Support

Mentoring for Aged Care Leaders should involve:

- a long-term arrangement during which both people learn from each other while developing a trusting relationship
- the mentor providing personal and professional advice, guidance and support to the mentee
- assisting the mentee to develop capabilities relevant to them professionally and personally
- a safe environment in which the mentee can share and reflect on whatever issues are affecting his/her personal and professional development.

For assistance with the design or procurement of a mentoring program refer to the *Mentoring Program Design Specifications* - for a copy please contact Tanya Southworth, Leadership Development Project Manager tanya.southworth@cshisc.com.au.

Leadership programs

Leadership programs must be designed to develop leadership capability at each level, as specified in the *Australian Aged Care Leadership Capability Framework*, and to provide a transformational learning experience. Programs should provide a challenging and rewarding learning journey that is innovative, spacious and highly relationship-focussed.

It is strongly recommended that Aged Care Leadership Programs be designed with the following features:

- measurable outcomes, that help manage expectations, set goals and provide benchmarks for assessing participants' development
- significant time spent face-to-face with fellow participants including opportunities to form networks and to learn from peers
- highly experiential learning activities with an emphasis on reflective practice and workplace-based application
- an inter-related sequence of core and elective activities over a period of at least 9-12 months
- a variety of learning opportunities including:
 - facilitated workshops
 - web-based two-hour 'roundtables' with topic experts (Levels 1 and 2 only)
 - peer networks for ongoing discussion, support and project work
- coaching support (see below)
- mentoring support (see above)
- a combination of personal and professional development with a strong focus on 'leadership of self' as well as 'leadership of others'.
- highly-skilled facilitators who are able to:
 - maintain neutrality and inclusivity
 - recognise and name group dynamics
 - facilitate challenging discussions, and to
 - assist individuals to identify and work on unhelpful patterns of behaviour in themselves and others.



- a requirement for explicit, continuing organisational support. Participation in a program would be contingent upon the involvement and support of the organisation, including, for example:
 - formal sign-off on participation from management and/or board
 - regular progress check-ins with the participant's superior and/or board
 - work time allowance for development activities
 - opportunities to apply learnings in the organisation, i.e. to practice 'on'
- strong support for transfer of learning by providing multiple points of transfer to the participants' organisations including:
- encouraging peers or 'intact teams' to attend together such that participants are not just involved as an individual, they are involved as their organisation, or regional network.
- action learning projects that drive real outcomes
- inviting 'significant others' to participate in events/workshops, for example a board chair, manager or direct report/s.
- recognition that participants must be 'ready and willing' to do the program. The foundation/orientation workshop would be designed to help those who aren't quite ready, to get ready.
- a strong Aged Care Industry focus. Program content and activities must be clearly attuned to the context of the Aged Care Industry and will assist participants to reflect on and address current sector challenges.
- workshops offered in regional 'hubs' as well as metropolitan areas to facilitate access for leaders in rural and remote areas.

Coaching support

Coaching support for Aged Care Leaders should be:

- focused on identified, work-related, development areas/issues
- provided by an experienced, paid, leadership coach who may/may not have direct experience of the recipient's role but will have relevant leadership experience and sound coaching skills
- focussed on improving the individual's performance in their current role
- a set duration or number of sessions.

Leadership Resources Toolbox

A Leadership Resources Toolbox would provide and/or recommend relevant and accessible leadership-related resources to support development of identified leadership capabilities.

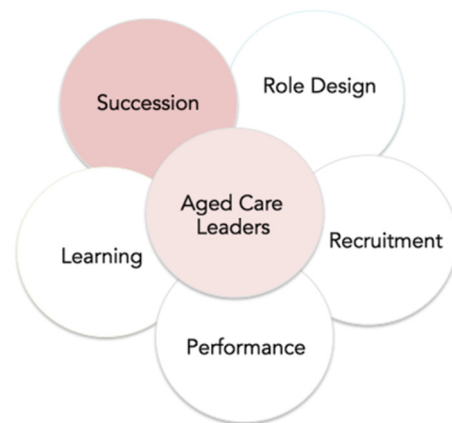
Toolbox resources could include books, articles, podcasts, webinars, short courses, seminars, models, processes, forums and other identified opportunities for leadership development and support.

Succession

Why is effective succession planning important?

How can I minimise the disruption and expense that happens when key people leave my organisation?

What can help plan succession in my organisation effectively?



Succession planning involves identifying and developing people with the potential to move into more senior roles in an Aged Care team, function or organisation.

Succession planning helps ensure you can meet the future needs of your team, function or organisation, while minimising the disruption caused when someone leaves a job.

It's not easy to do, and it's getting harder. Our ageing workforce means that it's never been more important to develop and retain capable people at all levels in Aged Care. A shrinking percentage of younger people in the workforce makes the pool of available resources increasingly smaller.



Why is succession planning important?

It's an investment in the future: Developing leadership talent in-house is a long-term investment. Succession planning is vital for getting the most from this investment. It helps you spend your training budget and resources on the people who will make the biggest difference to your team.

It helps to strengthen your talent pool: Succession planning helps to identify and retain valuable people who currently occupy critical roles, and their potential successors, helping you make the most of your investment in leadership development activities.

It supports better career development and loyalty to the organisation: By identifying an employee with high potential, you are able to support that individual in a way that also moves their career forward. This often encourages loyalty to the organisation because people are likely to stick around longer when they see they have a future with the organisation. By challenging and rewarding talented people with engaging assignments, projects and development opportunities, you help to eliminate their desire to seek opportunities elsewhere.

It saves time and money: It's also worth considering the significant costs and pain involved with not having a succession plan in place. This includes the stress of scrambling to find a replacement when a key individual leaves your organisation, and the loss of productivity that can occur at many levels of the organisation.

What can help?

The Aged Care Leadership Capability Framework provides a foundation for leadership succession planning, by providing benchmark capabilities that can help you identify people with the potential to take on critical leadership roles.

Start by looking at how you currently assess, develop and select people for roles throughout your organisation. Consider the following questions:

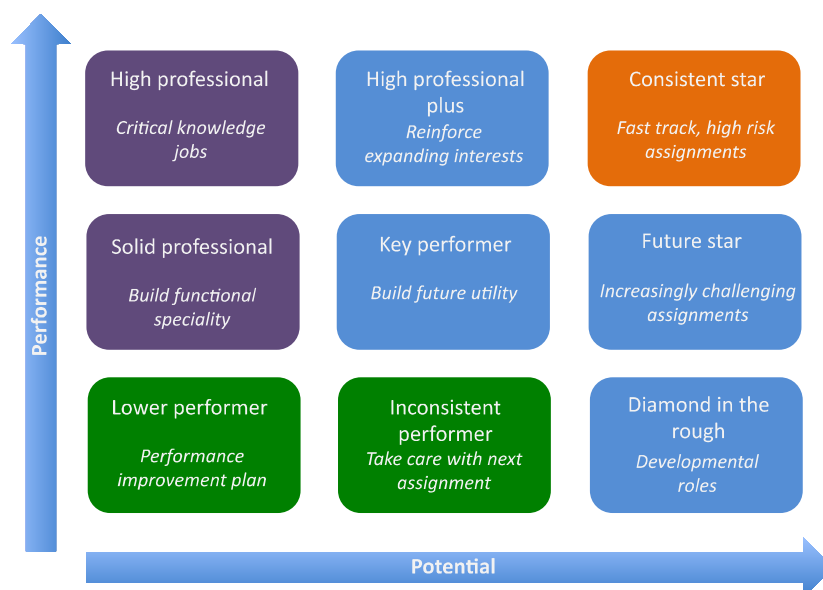
- How do you currently identify people who may be ready to step up into key roles today?
- How do you ensure that you are training the right people for leadership roles, and assessing their leadership capabilities accordingly?

- What would happen if a key contributor left my team or organisation unexpectedly?
- What is the average age of the people in your team, function or entire organisation? What percentage of your people are considering retiring within the next five years?

The insights that you get from answering these questions should help with designing and implementing a succession planning process.

The key elements in succession planning are a continuous cycle of assessment of key positions, identification of key talent, assessment of key talent against the relevant leadership capabilities, and development planning and monitoring. At a minimum, it's worth establishing a high-level process to guide these activities in your organisation.

Use the Aged Care Leadership Capability Framework and the nine box performance and potential grid below to guide the analysis your people's potential. The nine box grid is a commonly used tool that aids analysis of people's strengths and development needs. It helps identify where to put your effort into developing people for succession. But be careful to use the nine box model as a guide only - it is meant to help support thinking about succession, not provide a conclusive assessment of an individual's worth.



The colours provide some assistance with identifying who to consider for succession planning:

- Orange: These people should be in your most strategically important roles.
- Blue represents the people who should be considered for inclusion in succession planning.
- Purple indicates core performers, who are not ready (and may not be interested) in taking on a more challenging role.
- Green indicates low performers who need support to lift their performance or may need replacement.

A succession plan can be developed using the outputs of the assessment of key talent. The succession plan itself may be as simple as a table listing the key positions in your team, function or organisation, and the individuals who should be considered for filling those positions, should they become vacant.

A good succession plan has more than one potential replacement for key positions. That can be very challenging for organisations with few employees, particularly in rural and remote communities where skilled people are in short supply.

What can I do if I don't have a successor ready to replace a key position?

If you're having trouble identifying an obvious successor, consider all the potential people and make a decision about whether they have the capability to develop rapidly in the role, or whether external recruiting is required.

Aged services operating in rural and remote locations often face considerable challenges recruiting suitably capable people. It's worth reviewing the role requirements, using the Aged Care Leadership Capability Framework, and considering whether someone from a non-Aged Care background could have the critical capabilities, and could be trained in any Aged-Care specific skills and/or knowledge required to do the job effectively.

With appropriate support, people with the right values, core leadership capabilities and a willingness to learn can acquire the skills and knowledge required to work in Aged Care. Trying to develop the right values and core leadership capabilities in someone who may have the technical skills and knowledge is a far more difficult task.

Industry Stories

The following section of this Companion Guide features industry stories from leaders in aged care who have started making use of the Aged Care Leadership Capability Framework in their organisations. Each story provides information about what steps they have taken, what has worked well, and plans for the future.

These stories have been shared to help others who may be thinking about leadership development but are unsure of where to start, and also to help others who just want some ideas about possibilities.

Share your experiences with the Capability Framework through the Aged Care Leadership Network by contacting;

Tanya Southworth email address: Tanya.southworth@cshisc.com.au.



Arlene Quinn at Baptistcare

At Baptistcare succession planning is part of the organisational culture, part of the way things are done. People Development Manager Arlene Quinn and her team “look for leaders everywhere”.

“We look for leaders in our care staff... we look for leaders within our coordinator and our administration staff. We see a slot ahead for them... and work with them to get there.”

Effective succession planning helps both the individual and the organisation. People stay motivated, appropriately challenged and satisfied with their work. Organisations retain valuable skills, knowledge and relationships. As Arlene suggests:

“You save time and money if you're able to identify people early... and really start to work with individuals and build them.”

As one of many Baptistcare succession planning success stories, Arlene relates the career path of a part-time physiotherapist, who, through a structured approach that included higher education, working with a mentor and acting and co-working roles, is now a relief facility manager.

For Arlene, the Aged Care Leadership Development Companion Guide has been particularly helpful in discussing key human resource and development activities with those outside the field. As she observes:

“We don't always understand those HR and those development concepts... unless we're technical experts or specialist experts.”

Now Arlene's considering customising the Companion Guide—giving it a 'Baptistcare focus'—and making it available to new managers coming into the organisation.

Florence Padman at Padman Health Care (SA & QLD)

At Padman Health Care Director of Nursing Florence Padman and her team are using the Australian Aged Care Leadership Capability Framework to assist with a range of human resource activities including developing position descriptions and job advertisements as well as appraisals.

Florence suggests that good starting point would be to consider the five key domains—Self, Others, Purpose, Business and Change:

“We used the capabilities under each of the five key domains to review a number of our documents.”

As Florence explains, this included a review of job descriptions for Level 1 and 2 leaders in the organisation:

“For instance, I’ve been able to use the behavioural indicators in the Purpose domain to review and improve the job descriptions for Level 2 and Level 1 leaders in my organisation.”

The result was job descriptions that Padman Health Care managers found clearer and easier to understand.

Following on from there, Florence and her team set about remodeling their appraisal tool for Level 2 and Level 1 leaders. Initial feedback indicates this has enabled a “far more objective and a more detailed appraisal of the individual.”



Sue Thomson at McClean Care (NSW)

At McClean Care (NSW), CEO Sue Thomson and her team are pursuing their mission to become a “truly values-led organisation”. They’ve embarked on a cultural change program where, as Sue explains, the objective is:

“A culture where the person in need of support or care... is at the very centre of the support...and the support is delivered according to what that person wants and needs.”

The Aged Care Leadership Capability Framework is helping guide the development of the kind of leadership that is integral to such a values-led organisation.

Changes to the McClean Care management structure have focused attention on development of Level 2 and Level 3 managers, and the Framework has been helpful. For Sue, all five domains are important, but Self is the obvious place to start.

“For example... Self – if we have our Level 2 and Level 3 leaders embracing that domain, then, if they are developed within themselves, they can go forth and literally carry that leadership into the workplace.”

Expanding further, she adds:

“Unless you have an insight into yourself and what you need to do ...to be the leader that you need to be... then any other foundation that you try to lay will not bring about the result that you’re aiming for.”

Lucy O'Flaherty at Glenview Community Services (TAS)

For Glenview Community Services CEO Lucy O'Flaherty the Australian Aged Care Leadership Capability Framework helps focus attention on leaders developing their skills and working to their strengths. As Lucy puts it:

"Aged Care has some of the most empathic, compassionate and hard-working staff... and, a lot of energy has historically gone into the 'task' area rather than the 'skill development' area, so this is not only an excellent opportunity to look at where various skills need to lie... and how they might contribute to what we're trying to achieve, but it's also been an amazing opportunity to help people develop... and work to their strengths."

At Glenview the Framework has assisted a shift from a traditional management team to the formation of a broader, deeper leadership group. Lucy explains:

"(The Framework is) a great tool to identify a leadership group. We've moved away from a management group within our organisation, and we now have a leadership group. And that's made up of, not only the traditional executives, but also managers, and, more broadly, key decision makers around the organisation. People that, by the nature of what they do and how they do that in our organisation... are the key decision makers in our business. So it's helped us to get more depth within our ... leadership team."

A number of people development initiatives, inspired or underpinned by the Framework, are in train at Glenview, including an assertiveness workshop which is yielding 'amazing results'.

For Lucy and her team, the Framework encourages deeper reflection about management and leadership – bringing the 'how' and 'why' to the fore:

"It continues to be a really valuable lesson for myself, and the senior leadership team... because we have to stop and articulate how we're doing something... why we're doing something. What is it that is the difference between managing something and being the leader? We've had to do a lot of navel gazing ourselves in terms of trying to unpack it so that we can explain it to someone else."

And, while not easy, the outcomes of this reflection have been both practical and satisfying:

"It's been quite challenging... but it's been incredibly rewarding. I certainly feel much more confident in talking to my leadership group and talking about "this is what the vision is but this is what my expectations are..." By understanding what leadership means in very tangible terms, I've been able to assist the group to understand my vision a lot more clearly and that means we'll get to the end goal a lot faster."



Natasha Wilkinson, CEO Tabulum and Templar Home for the Aged (VIC)

Natasha Wilkinson is the CEO at Tabulum and Templar Home for the Aged in suburban Melbourne. She's also an active member of the Workforce Innovation Network (WIN), in Melbourne's South East.

As part of this network, a dedicated group of leaders and educators are collaborating to make a range of leadership development opportunities available to local Aged Care leaders. A key offering is the one year Graduate Certificate of Management, available through Chisholm Institute.

In working with the educators to design the program, Natasha says:

"The Aged Care Leadership Framework was a fantastic sounding board for us. It was our ... benchmark."

Learning outcomes for the Graduate Certificate were derived from the Aged Care Leadership Capability Framework as well as stakeholder consultations. The group were able to match education requirements to leaders at different levels using the levels of leadership in the Framework.

Natasha is enthusiastic about the Aged Care Leadership Capability Framework and its capacity to be of benefit to the industry as a whole:

"This framework is a guide... it's not necessarily going to be all things for everybody... but the Aged Care industry can use it as a benchmark...a standard for the industry. "

and, especially, within the current industry context:

"With all the reforms coming through, we need to have people who are smarter... more aligned... more knowledgeable about what they need to do to take the industry forward."

In Natasha's view, there's value in the Framework for all organisations, small to large:

"There's so much information in there... so many tips and skills. For smaller organisations (without) the resources to be able to develop something like this – they will get so much out of it. For larger organisations I think it's fantastic for them to be able to map their leadership skills and ... have a look at what the industry is saying."

Marina Bolton, Executive Manager Human Resources, Warrigal (NSW)

Warrigal CEO Mark Sewell is an enthusiastic advocate of the Aged Care Leadership Capability Framework, and Marina Bolton, Executive Manager HR, explains that the scope of the capability framework is recognised and appreciated at Warrigal:

"...a number of staff have commented how important these leadership capabilities have been for them because (they) look at the person and the organisation as well as its future and business."

As an organisation, Warrigal has embraced the Aged Care Leadership Capability Framework in a variety of ways. Marina and the team are now using the capabilities as part of Warrigal's performance appraisal process for executive and middle managers.

Reflecting on the impact of that decision, Marina says the capabilities have helped focus on the individual as important within the organisation. She says:

"...I think in performance appraisals we tend to focus on outcomes and the work and the business, whereas the Aged Care leadership capabilities focus on the person. In many organisations we tend to forget about the person."

On the importance of the highest level of commitment to such a framework, Marina is clear:

"I think if the CEO believes in the capabilities and we cascade them out, and we walk the talk, then it has a far better success rate."

Next year, Warrigal intends to use the capabilities as part of a management development initiative. And that's just the beginning. Marina says:

"We're going to spend the whole of next year embracing the capabilities and trialing them across the organisation in a variety of capacities."

For more information

We hope these stories help others and we also invite people to share their experiences with the Capability Framework by linking up with the Aged Care Leadership Network by contacting:

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