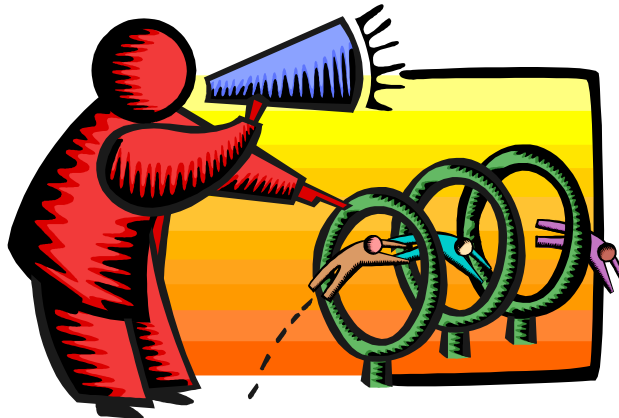


CHARTERED MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

DIPLOMA IN MANAGEMENT

Unit C44

Effective Communication and Information
Management



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Youth Offending Team

In 1996 an Audit Commission Report 'Misspent Youth' identified shortcomings in the Youth Justice System and made recommendations for radical change. In 1998 major new legislation contained in the Crime and Disorder Act required that Local Authorities form new multi-agency Youth Offending Teams.

Swindon Youth Offending Team (Yot) began in June 1999, starting with five main contributory partners, Social Services, Police, Probation, Health and Education. I was one of the 'founders' of our team when I was seconded from the Police to the team at its inception. The aim of the team is to 'prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people'.

Over time the team has grown to 40 staff and 60 volunteers. My role now is 'Head of Service', my main responsibilities are: -

- Line manage 4 operational managers
- Foresee and respond to strategic developments
- Prepare strategic plans and develop new services
- Negotiate budget and resources and deliver services on budget
- Analyse and evaluate performance and data management
- Collaborate with partners at a senior level for joint working
- Promote the service through effective public relations
- Motivate staff to fulfil their potential and improve services

Terms of Reference

This Management report will demonstrate my knowledge, skills and abilities and my understanding of my role in the effective use of information and communication – particularly needed to run effective meetings.

On completion of this report I will have demonstrated my understanding of: -

- The importance of good information management in the Yot.
- The range of communication methods available and used at the Yot.
- Information storage and retrieval including legal requirements relevant to the work of the Yot.
- Improvement needed to maintain productive working relationships.
- Decision-making models that enable me to identify, validate and analyse information that supports decision making at the Yot.
- Planning and running meetings.

Part A – Effective Communication

Introduction

The main reason for the establishment of Yots in 1999/2000 was because statutory and voluntary justice and welfare agencies were not working together to tackle the causes of youth crime and anti-social behaviour. Bringing all the key agencies together by legislation (1998 Crime & Disorder Act) ensured effective communication and improved outcomes for young people.

The self-study guide suggests the Jones GR et al (1999) definition, 'sharing between two or more individuals or groups to reach a common understanding'. Answers.com builds on this saying, 'transmission; the exchange of thoughts, messages or information by speech, signals writing and behaviour which leads to interpersonal rapport'.

It is my experience that communication must be a two way process and that to some people or organisations it does not come easy and has to be worked at – like any other skill. Effective communication is absolutely crucial to the partnership working needed to deliver our objectives.

Effective communication is not as easy as it would seem; if I want to share information I need to put the information together and transmit it, this may need encoding or translation to make it understandable. On its way to the recipient there is the opportunity for the information to be corrupted or hampered. On receipt it needs to be decoded.

Fundamental Model of Communication



— Message — Modulated — Corrupted — Demodulated — Reply ↪

Source: Connexions

The Dangers of Ineffective Communication

The study guide suggests that approximately 85% of our time at work is spent in some form of communication (Adams DA 1993). I certainly believe this to be true, even if I am not obviously communicating by speech or e-mail, the work I do such as reports will be distributed and will communicate Yot business to others. Because I am aware of this I make great efforts to ensure clarity and accuracy in all my work in order to give a professional image to others at all times. In my work poor communication could lead to loss of funding, appeals in Court, loss of trust, interagency conflict.

Barriers in Communication

The main barrier experienced at the Yot is information overload – where useful information is lost in ‘Spam’ sent by e-mail, where communications are not read but deleted. I prevent this by only sending information that needs to be sent and taking care to title the e-mail correctly. Working in a multi-agency team, another barrier is making the mistake of assuming the receiver actually understands the message. Staff are encouraged to beware of using ‘jargon’ that is common in their organisation but confusing to others.

Types of Communication

In considering types of communication used at the Yot, I have concluded that ‘face to face’ is the most effective and the least is ‘general e-mails’ sent to all staff that are only pertinent to a few. Appendix A looks at types of communication I use at work, advantages and disadvantages. Recommendations from this exercise are that general e-mails should not be sent. There is always room to improve, so I need to take the time to give clear instructions, avoid jargon, use a language the receiver will understand, check out I am understood, listen, observe body language and be clear in my written work.

Part B – Gathering, Selecting and Storing Information

Introduction

In my role as Head of Service I have to have an in-depth understanding of operational data and statistics that inform me on the performance of the team. I also receive information on Yot human resources, finance and national standards. A mass of information and data relating to local and national strategies arrives on my desk on a daily basis, this can often relate to legislation that affects the decisions I make. I make a quick analysis of these different types of information and either deal with them immediately, pass on to operational managers to put into practice, or put to one side for further consideration or filing. It is very important that I analyse

information such as that relating to key performance indicators so that I can react to trends, allocate resources and finances, bid for more money or resources and strive to maintain quality outcomes. Much of the information I receive is raw statistics or facts. I consider this 'data' and constantly check it out and ask for it to be processed and quantified so that it becomes 'information' that has a purpose and can be commonly understood. An example of this is where data is presented as statistics, but not in actual numbers of young people offending or in custody. Once I have the numbers I can allocate resources. A definition I particularly like is 'Information is organised data which is understood to have significance and meaning' (Christ.links.com).

Types of Information

The self-study guide identifies 2 main types of information. These are quantitative or 'hard' and qualitative or 'soft'. Many of the Yots key performance indicators and national standards measures are quantitative, where we know how many or often we do something. These are set by the Home Office and are national. This allows for direct performance comparisons against our 'family' of similar sized Yots, regionally and nationally. When the figures are combined they can be used by the Youth Justice Board to prove efficiency and effectiveness and lobby government. This would be of little interest to the young people and parents we work with. Therefore, underpinning this data is a system that measures qualitatively the work we do with offenders and victims. An example of this is recording satisfaction and feedback on the close of interventions. An effective practice and quality assurance programme looks at 2 areas of our work each year to look at the quality of our interventions and outcomes.

Much of the information I look at is 'Primary' self-generated from statistics, meetings and colleagues. Because we work in partnership with others we also make good use of 'secondary' information such as crime, drug, health, and education information that can inform the plans for our interventions. An example of this would be where anti-social behaviour is increasing in an area; we move resources into that area to target the offenders.

Storing Information for Retrieval

The Yot stores information for a variety of reasons, these are analysed at Appendix B. The majority of information fits into 3 areas:

- Offender Files
- Staff Records
- Operational and Strategic Business

Due to the sensitivity of the information we store, we have all electronic data saved onto a server outside our building and access only through a secure password system. The templates we use are nationally recognised to ensure they are Data Protection Act 1998 compliant in that they are fairly and lawfully processed for the purposes of preventing offending and re-offending. A system is in place to anonymise and cleanse data at given points so that it is relevant, accurate, not excessive and kept no longer than necessary. My analysis at Appendix B highlighted areas for

improvement with regards to paper files held at the Yot. Although we have a weeding policy, this has not been reviewed for some time. This policy was written by me and is DPA compliant in its process. There is room for improvement with paper files storage where they are often left on desks at the end of the day rather than secured in metal cabinets. There is no tracking system for paper files. Should they go missing it would be difficult to investigate who could have taken them, what the content currently is and how this could affect the public confidence in our professionalism as an organisation answerable to the Local Authority and Home Office.

For information to be of any real use it needs to be quality information. I have analysed information that is expected to be sent to the Yot within 24 hours of a young person coming to the notice of the Police. I have based this on the 5 elements that the study guide recommends for information to be 'quality'. From this analysis I have determined that the system generally works well in passing on important information from the Police to the Yot. If this system was not in place young offenders would have more opportunity to continue offending whilst on bail and pending their Court appearance. This information is shared every morning with all staff in a 'state of play' meeting. Information tells us of new offenders, current offender's with new activity, risks and seriousness. Yot staff follow up on certain information immediately by attending the police station or courts as needed.

QUALITY OF FORM 87 INFORMATION (YOUNG PERSON COMING TO THE NOTICE OF THE POLICE)	
Relevant	Form 87 was a Wiltshire wide form produced by the Police. The information it contained was not always relevant. The Police accepted this observation and consulted the Yot to redesign it making the form much more relevant.
Current	This form is expected to be at the Yot within 24 hours. The majority are received in the timeframe. This allows for immediate Crime Prevention interventions to commence if needed. However, some forms do not get sent or can be weeks out of date. This reduces efficiency of any Yot interventions in preventing offending.
Adequate	Each section of the forum informs a process that can be instigated by the Yot e.g. victim details allow us to contact the victim to canvas thoughts for Restorative Justice. If sections are incomplete then this work cannot commence in a timely manner.
Timely	If the Form 87 does not arrive on time it is possible that staff will not be directed to attend Court to assist with sentencing, this could cause delays in the Justice system.
Reliable	The information is completed by the Police Officer dealing with the case. These forms have always been found to be reliable in their content.

Protecting electronic Information

I understand the importance of protecting electronic information held at the Yot. Over time systems have been put in place to reduce common risks associated with data storage.

RISKS TO ELECTRONIC INFORMATION	
Risk to Hardware <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire/Smoke • Liquids • Magnetic Fields • Power Surges • Accidents/ Dropping 	<p>The computer hardware is issued personally to staff. They are aware of the need to take personal responsibility of their computer terminals and laptops. Most systems are modern and up to date so staff are keen to treat them with care. Incidents of damage to hardware are very low.</p>
Risk to CDs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floppy Disks • Memory Sticks 	<p>Staff have lost information that they have stored on these formats and now tend to have a back up plan at all times. They are little used by Yot staff.</p>
Recovering Lost Data	<p>Staff have lost data on a number of occasions. This is very frustrating. While a few instances can be attributed to the machine it is more likely a human error that can be avoided in the future with training. We have a service contract that is called upon in these cases.</p>
Making Backups	<p>All the computer terminals we use are linked into a shared system. This is accessed through the Internet. We now have no servers of our own and rely on our provider to back up our information. When working from laptops – the hard drives are disconnected so that staff do not rely on the hardware.</p>
Precaution Against Theft	<p>All equipment is tagged with the Yot postcode as an obvious deterrent. All hard drives have been modified so that information is saved on external servers and not on the terminals, this includes laptops. Laptops have been stolen in the past, there is never any information that could cause a business risk stored on them. Discs are rarely used, and those that are, are wiped or stored in locked drawers when not in use.</p>

These systems are all well and good, but I am aware that the people using them need reminders and training so that data is protected and security systems are observed.

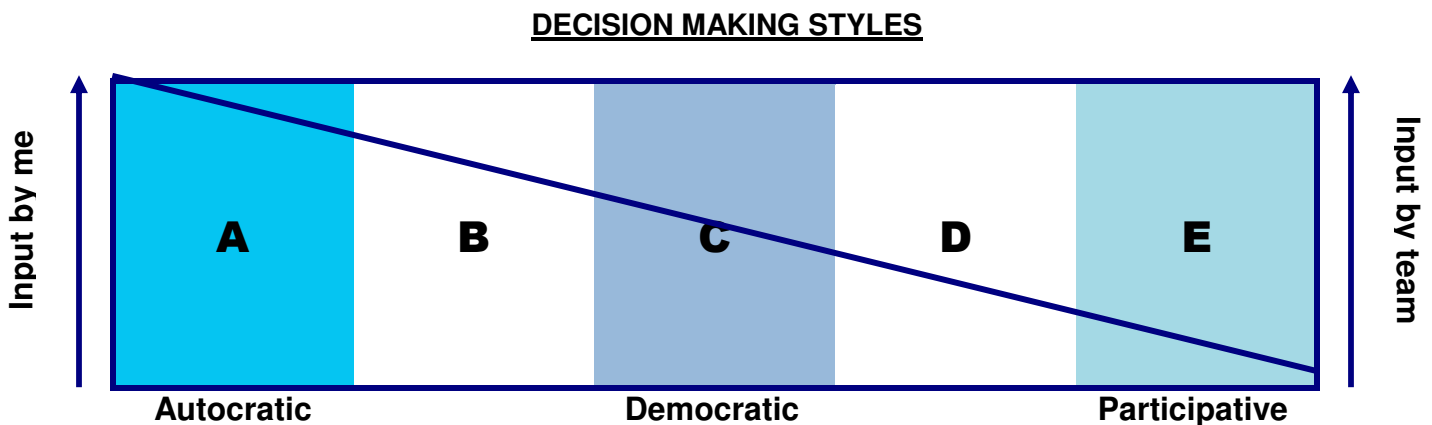
Part C – Using Information to Make Decisions

Introduction

Mullins LJ (2005) tells me that 'Successful management lies in responding to internal and external change. This involves the clarification of objectives, the specification of problems, and the search for and implementation of solutions. The organisation is seen as an information-processing network with numerous decisions points'. As the manager there is an expectation from my managers, staff, partners, the public and to those I am accountable to that I will make decisions. I can only make decisions based on the information I have available to me at the time, so I methodically store relevant information in accessible systems so that I can make the best decision I can – fully understanding that I will never have all the information. Mullins' definition above is co-terminus with my need to make decisions as a manager.

My Decision Style

I have adapted the 3 point decision making model contained in the study guide to take into consideration the 5 point model by VROOM and YETTON (1973) to illustrate the decision making styles I use at different times.



- A:** This is where I make the decisions alone based on the information available to me. An example of this would be a statutory or legal duty.
- B:** This would be where my management team inform me and I decide on a solution alone such as with falling performance.
- C:** This would be where I share a problem with my staff individually. Having listened to their opinions I make the final decision which may or may not reflect the influence of staff such as moving resources.
- D:** This would be where I share a problem with staff as a group. Having listened to their opinions and solutions, I make the final decision which may or may not reflect the influence of the group such as change of direction/ policy/ procedure the staff deliver.

E: This would be where I would chair a group of staff to generate and evaluate solutions to a problem in an attempt to reach a group consensus on a solution such as a change to the rota or a duty system that the staff all take a part in.

Having considered the above model I have concluded that I tend to move easily between all three with a tendency to be AUTOCRATIC, but trying to look DEMOCRATIC and PARTICIPATIVE.

The Decision Making Process – How I make decisions

The self-study guide suggests a 6-stage model for decision-making – I have applied this to 2 decisions that I have made.

DECISION 1. INSTIGATION OF A WEEDING POLICY FOR PAPER AND ELECTRONIC FILES	
STAGE 1 Recognition of Decision Requirements	Over a number of years paper files on completed cases were stacked in every conceivable cupboard, shelf, box, window ledge. It was not possible to index these files and there was a growing security risk should there be a break in to the building. We had run out of room.
STAGE 2 Diagnosis and Analysis of Causes	These paper files were kept as 'back up' to an unreliable computer data system and because of an unawareness of data protection guidance. There was a presumption that they must e kept for 7 years. There was a business risk where files could not be located and electronic data was poor due to double entry of information into paper files as well as computer files.
STAGE 3 Development of Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study data protection act and interpret correctly so that files can be destroyed. • Purchase better computer system. • Purchase better software package to encourage staff to have confidence in it. • Consider budget risks as there is only a finite amount available. • I considered micro storage options and discarded them.
STAGE 4 Selecting an Alternative	I took my proposals to the management team and it was agreed that files could be legally destroyed as data was being kept on electronic file.
STAGE 5 Implement my chosen Alternative	I wrote a weeding procedure with experienced admin team staff input and commenced a systematic weeding of unwanted data. This included money savings by reusing unused papers and file jackets. It took 2 years to catch up.
STAGE 6 Evaluation and Feedback	At stages in the implementation I reviewed the staff understanding of data protection and the procedures they were using so that they became 'programmed decisions' when file weeding.

Review of Decision 1

Decision making process: The decision that something needed to be done was 'participative' in that the overflowing files were becoming a problem. The decision to do something about it was mine as I could see a business risk if the files were stolen. The decision to implement my plan was Democratic as this was made by the management team. The implementation and writing a procedure was participative with admin who were keen to find a solution too. On reflection this was a worthwhile project as the business risk has now been significantly reduced, there is more room to store more important things, staff use of the computer system improved so much that there was very little on the paper files to weed in the end. File costs were reduced almost completely as there is a stock available now for future use. My only recommendation is that new staff need training on the procedure and on DPA principles. The process worked so I have no particular recommendations to make.

Decision 2

A different approach was taken to decision 2 which was the purchase of a new 'Early Interventions' computer package.

DECISION 2. PURCHASE OF 'UMIS' INFORMATION SYSTEM	
STAGE 1 Recognition of Decision Requirements	The decision making process for this problem was different from decision 1. Staff in the Early Interventions team had identified a need for the UMIS system, had visited another Yot that was using it and had seen it in action. They had begun to lobby management to purchase the system.
STAGE 2 Diagnosis and Analysis of Causes	The need for the new system was based on the different type of work this team does from the rest of the team. The system the rest of the team use could not be interrogated for data or returns that are demanded by the Home Office.
STAGE 3 Development of Alternatives	A brainstorming session was used to find solutions to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ways of retrieving data that was needed from the system we currently were using as a stop gap. This would mean writing a standalone programme. 2. Ways of finding the funding needed to purchase UMIS and train staff. This was a good process with lots of good ideas.
STAGE 4 Selecting an Alternative	The decision made was to apply for funding having received a quote from the computer programme owner. Management implemented a funding trawl.
STAGE 5 Implement my chosen Alternative	Once the system was ordered and paid for a training and delivery/ installation timetable was drawn up and staff were directed to attend training. Although this was seen as important, there was some staff resistance, to the training, some issues were around concerns over personal ability to use it.

<p>STAGE 6</p> <p>Evaluation and Feedback</p>	<p>Now that the system is running it will be evaluated for its ability to be interrogated for returns to the Home Office and it's 'userfriendliness'. The installers of the system seek feedback so that they can make improvements to the system as part of regular updates.</p>
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Review of Decision 2

This process used less participation in the process of actually making the decision to purchase the programme but did use brainstorming to look at solutions to some of the barriers to the purchase – mainly funding. On reflection I feel that the decision to have UMIS was already made by the staff. Efforts to look at alternatives did not come to anything as there was little motivation by staff to do so. A more Autocratic style at the beginning could have offered more alternatives for consideration.

For decision 2, groups were used in the process. There were benefits to group involvement:

- There were some good fresh ideas.
- There was an understanding by the group that finances needed to be found to purchase the system so it would not happen instantly.

In order to avoid problems I chaired these groups, so that their decision making process would not be slowed down, unrealistic options could be immediately discounted and everyone could have a say.

During the course of the 2 decisions described above, I have had to accept that I cannot please everyone and that some parts of the process were unpopular such as reducing some staff reliance on paper files (Decision 1) to the detriment of the shared database. I have encouraged others to make decisions that follow on from my decision, an example of that is, once I had decided to purchase the UMIS system (Decision 2) my business manager took control of the ordering and operations manager the training schedule. As part of any decision-making process I always try to use my preferred method, which is brainstorming and mind mapping, I have tried other tools such as criteria lists, but find them undynamic and restrictive.

Part D – Meetings, Meetings and More Meetings

Introduction

According to Blundell B and Murdock A (1997) 'Public sector managers do it in meetings' would be an appropriate bumper sticker – The need to follow process and to consult with various stakeholders is especially critical in the public domain.

For me, as the Yot manager, getting together with others for the common purpose of preventing offending and re-offending takes up a great deal of my time. I believe that they are a good use of my time – provided they are well chaired. Without these meetings I could not involve stakeholders and partners or hold anyone to account for shared targets or funding.

The Meetings I Attend Pros & Cons.

MEETINGS I ATTEND	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Yot managers - weekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeps all the management team up to date. • Regular monitoring of KPIs and National Standards. • Sharing strategic and operational planning. • Decisions are made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can take up to 3 hours to complete all business.
Yot staff meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of ideas exchanged with lots of staff all in one go. • Inclusive and team bonding. • Quick and cheap. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many staff to deal with any real decision making. • Some complain of not having the time to attend.
Partnership meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking. • Awareness of business opportunities such as joint funding or shared targets. • Held locally. • Use existing premises rather than hiring hotels etc. • Opportunity to raise profile of Yot and Yot work with partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be long with only a low % being related to Yot business. • Can be too many – often with 3 or 4 in one day seriously hampering ability to return to base and do my own work. • Can be poorly chaired sometimes.
Staff supervision and appraisals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to monitor and review staff performance. • Private and very ‘2 way’. • Easy to make decisions and agree behaviours and development. • Gets problems out in the open so that they can be sorted out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some staff do not like supervision and can be very difficult to manage. • Can become personalised. • Time consuming if planned and run properly.
Conferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking. • Getting up to date with policy or legislation. • Seeing a wider agenda than the local day to day. • Opens up some new opportunities such as volunteering for piloting new legislation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be expensive in money and time. • Often in London or Manchester which is hard work to get to. • Can have poor content telling me nothing I could not have worked out from a report.

It could be that some of the above meetings have more disadvantages than advantages. If that is the case I will choose not to attend - but I might seek to obtain the learning or outcomes by asking for the minutes or conference pack to be sent to me. This helps me manage my time so that I am in the office more than out of office.

Evaluation of a meeting I recently chaired

I was recently asked to Chair a meeting that had been in existence for years and was meeting as a practitioner's Forum. In the past 12 months the group had lost direction and was beginning to fragment, the incumbent Chair had stood down and no one was willing to take over. I had never actually attended this Forum before.

To evaluate the meeting I have compared it to a model by Phil and Jane Hodgson (1992).

PRACTITIONER'S FORUM	
Purpose	In order to understand the purpose of the meeting I arranged to have previous minutes, a copy of the Terms of Reference (TOR) and meet with the outgoing Chair. I received the paperwork, but the outgoing Chair had to cancel our meeting, so I was unable to fully understand the purpose. I understood it to fall into the categories of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem solving • Information seeking and providing • Influencing • Ideas and option generation • Consensus building
Planning	As part of planning I began to prepare an agenda. I discovered that no formal agenda was in place. I set an agenda based on the minutes of previous meetings and distributed to the names listed. Having an agenda is important and I ensured it was sent out in advance, and invited suggestions for 'Any other business'.
Opening the meeting	The room the meeting took place in was fine, but no refreshments were made available. A number of attendees arrived late. I set the tone and commenced on time, informing the group of the purpose of the meeting.
During the meeting	Hodgson and Hodgson (1992) recommended the following: <p>Adopt a positive tone ✓</p> <p>State the purpose ✓</p> <p>State the duration of the meeting ✓</p> <p>Start on time X. Although I started on time, a number of influential latecomers, including the outgoing Chair caused me to back track and effectively re-start.</p> <p>Keep the meeting on track ✓ I feel that previously the meetings had been unstructured and allowed to go off track. I kept it on track and felt that this was actually appreciated by those present.</p> <p>Encourage participation ✓ In order to do this I asked people to participate, made eye contact and showed active listening. As I was new to the meeting I checked out some points by asking open questions. However, I could have done better if I had acknowledged some contributions by thanking the person and then summarizing what they had said. This is a habit I need to get into.</p> <p>Keep an eye on the time ✓ I was unsure how long each agenda item could take and had to speed up the last 2 items in order to finish on time.</p> <p>Summarise X. Although some items were summarised as they were</p>

	dealt with either by me or the person with the information I forgot to take notes, so that I could summarize the high points and actions that people would be taking away with them. I now understand the importance of summarizing when decisions have been reached and needs to be recorded; when the agenda item is 'stuck' and needs rescuing; to clarify a complex issue, to avoid conflict and to clear up multiple options.
After the meeting	I worked with the minute taker (my PA) to put together the minutes for distribution within 48 hours. At this time I reviewed the minutes against the agenda and the TOR and found that they were congruent. Sent out minutes and papers to those who had not been able to attend. Leading up to next meeting I will chase up actions.

Having worked through this model I am confident that I chaired the meeting well with improved outcomes for those present. I have also compiled a check list (Appendix C) to score myself for chairing meetings – from this exercise I have learnt that I plan well and keep control, but I need to work at summarizing during and at the end of meetings.

Dealing with difficult people

I am pleased to say that there were no difficult people at the above meeting, as a Forum, those present wanted to be there and to contribute. I have Chaired meetings where I have struggled with difficult people. There was a culture some time ago at our team meetings where a few people would always find fault and wish to argue a point – even if they could never do anything with that point. I have systematically met with these people outside the meeting – either after the meeting or before the next one and challenged them. I set a positive tone and made it clear that I will not tolerate negative behaviour as in my experience this just brings everyone down. This has worked well for dominant and argumentative people. I try to get the peer group to stop 'meetings within meetings' by giving an obvious 'look'. I find the hardest is people who do not want to contribute – for these people, I try and prime them beforehand with an input that I will give them and ask them to give in the meeting – this tends to help them concentrate and not drop off. I have found that it is very important not to let anyone get me angry in a meeting – but to stay calm and deal with them later.

Effective negotiations during meetings

For the above meeting I felt that I did not need negotiation skills as I was more of a 'facilitator' on that occasion. However, some meetings I have involve negotiations for money and resources. I am always clear of what I want from the deal but always wish to ensure that both parties leave feeling that there has been a win-win. I also understand the importance of setting up a cordial and trustworthy atmosphere and try to hold the meeting at my office where I have control. I try to have a fall back position where I can barter something else to get what I want. I am determined never to end up committing myself or the Yot to something that we will regret later. My experience has been to be accommodating and to keep the point simple, this has stood me in good stead so that people are happy to involve me in negotiations for new projects or funding in true partnership.

TYPES OF COMMUNICATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Method	Advantage	Disadvantage	Recommendation
Face to Face	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High information richness • Can see reactions and body language • 100% sure message has been delivered. • Instant feedback • Builds trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot always locate recipient • Takes more effort/ time than other methods • Geography / distance issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to face in meetings is very good • Back up if necessary by minutes, recording decisions as to who will do what. • Use as often as possible.
Telephone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance is no problem • Can be quick and concise • You can hide your emotions • Volume of calls can be high • Good for chasing up people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can interrupt • May have to leave voicemail • You cannot 'read' other persons reaction • Not backed up with evidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep to the point • Make an effort to 'check-out' that the recipient is happy with the outcome as you cannot see this.
Letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be formal and add weight to subject. • Can be cc'd to others for info/ or peer support • Can be the basis of further work showing a data trail. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can get lost/ destroyed without acknowledgement of receipt • Can be ignored • Reaction cannot be observed by sender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have letters 'gatekept', by others in the team before sending to maintain high standards.
Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick and easy • Can cut and paste content • Multiple sending • Data trail attached • Quick turn around – resend with instructions or decision made • Can be 'tagged' to acknowledge receipt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be missent • Not always secure • Can be sent to people who do not want it • Tone can be misunderstood • Can be used as a weapon in conflict situations • Can cause laziness or avoidance of others • Can be used to dump or blame 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails should be only sent to the people who you want to receive them to avoid information overload. Multiple – all team sending should be avoided. • If e-mails are not clear, recipient should speak to sender to seek clarity.
Manuals Procedures Protocols Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful in training or when checking law/ legislation • Encourages uniformity • Best practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be 'weighty' • Expensive • Go out of date quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructions, procedures, protocols should be stored on a shared drive/ electronically – to give easy access, easy updating, save paper.

STORING INFORMATION FOR RETRIEVAL

Type of information	Why is it stored	What is the storage system	How effective is the storage system?	Data protection Act Compliant ?	Recommendations
Offender Files	Working files Accessed by case worker + all Yot.	Paper files for legislation and communication. Electronic YOIS database for case notes and intervention/assessment.	Paper is in metal filing cabinets in each office. Easy access. Electronic is on a shared database which is accessible by whole team. Password protected.	Yes. Once the case is closed the paper file is recycled and content destroyed. Electronic is anonymised at age 18, data is kept for statistical purposes.	There is a weeding policy in place – This needs to be reviewed and new staff informed of the procedure.
Staff Records	Staff supervision and appraisals	Paper files Electronic used for appraisals	Metal filing cabinet	For current staff we are DPA compliant. Supervision files for staff who have left are still in cabinet. File cabinet is fire resistant and locked.	Staff supervision records should be weeded and old files disposed of or destroyed.
Minutes of meetings Budgets Finance Reports Plans	Monitoring of performance and planning for operational needs	Electronic on 'Shared drive'	The system is password protected. Easily accessed by all staff.	Yes. No personal data is stored in this system.	Some information may be staff sensitive. There is no way of 'not sharing' information on the shared drive. Alternatives need to be sought.

Self-analysis of my effectiveness in chairing recent meetings -checklist

Ineffective

- I rarely use agendas 1 ———— **X** ————> **10**
- Agenda is rarely adhered to 1 ———— **X** ————> **10**
- My meetings never start on time 1 ———— **X** ————> **10**
- My meetings always overrun 1 ———— **X** ————> **10**
- I do not state the meeting purpose 1 ———— **X** ————> **10**
- Only those who want to join in 1 ———— **X** ————> **10**
- I never thank contributors 1 ———— **X** ————> **10**
- I never summarise agreed actions 1 **X** ————> **10**
- I never reflect back to members 1 ———— **X** ————> **10**
- Decision are made by a few people 1 ———— **X** ————> **10**
- I never issue minutes 1 ———— **X** ————> **10**
- I never follow up actions 1 ———— **X** ————> **10**

Effective

- I always use agendas
- Agenda is always adhered to
- My meetings always start on time
- My meetings never overrun
- I always state the purpose
- I ensure everyone joins in
- I always thank contributors
- I always summarise agreed actions
- I always reflect back to members
- Everyone contributes to decisions
- I always issue minutes
- I always follow up actions

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