

Checklist for developing your policies



Agencies* write policies and procedures to help staff comply with legislation, adhere to standards, and create transparent practices.

Policies are written guidelines that help decision-makers form consistent, legally correct, and fair decisions.

..... This checklist is designed to supplement, rather than replace, relevant standards, policies and legislation governing agency service delivery.

Use this checklist to create useful and relevant policy

Consider the purpose, context, and accountability of your policy

- What is the purpose of this policy?
- Is it intended to mitigate a risk, address a gap in knowledge, introduce a new system or function, or respond to an issue that was revealed by a serious incident?
- What legislation or regulations are relevant for this policy?
- How will this policy guide readers to interpret legislation or regulations?
- How will this policy interact with existing policies, procedures and guidelines? Can existing policies be updated with this information instead?
- How does the policy impact on staff and/or stakeholders, including service users? Particularly people in vulnerable or marginalised groups.
- Which principles of best practice, or relevant professional standards, apply to this policy?
- How does this policy align with your strategic documents, for example, Strategic Plan and Service Delivery Charter?
- Which individuals, roles, and teams own and are responsible for implementing, communicating, monitoring and updating the policy?

Things to include in your policy

- Clearly articulate the objective of the policy, and the principles underlying it.
- State how the policy aligns with relevant legislation, regulations and statutory powers.
- Identify and list which other organisational documents, including other policies, are related to this policy.
- Define changes to recordkeeping processes.
- Explain what users should do in cases where this policy appears to conflict with other organisational policies.
- Define key terms. Make sure definitions are consistent with definitions in relevant legislation and related policies.
- Define teams and roles and their levels of responsibility/ies for the policy.

- State when the policy takes effect, and when you will review it.
- Explain the circumstances that the policy applies to.
- Define what constitutes a breach of the policy.
- Detail the consequences of breaching the policy.

Implementing the policy

- Decide what resources, teams and timeframes you need to implement the policy.
- Develop procedures that instruct and support staff how to apply the policy.
- Train staff how to use the policy and procedures appropriately (including new employees and contractors).
- Monitor compliance and assess possible breaches.
- Measure how the policy is addressing the risks you intend it to mitigate.

Reviewing the policy

- Identify who is responsible for reviewing the policy. The level of reviewer should be commensurate with the level of risk that the policy is addressing.
- Review by the date specified, or sooner if required.
- Check that the content is still accurate and relevant.
- Update the policy with relevant changes to legislation, agency structure, processes.
- Schedule the next review date.

Format and delivery

Confirm the policy is:

- representing the agency's values, standards and best practices
- written in plain English, using simple, everyday language (not jargon) to communicate clearly with readers
- available in formats that cater to the needs of all readers, including people with disabilities, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- accessible to all staff
- published on the agency's website.

* We use the word 'agencies' to describe all of the Queensland state government departments, local councils, public universities and statutory authorities that we can investigate.