

Developing policies for your organisation

Policies are the guiding principles by which an operation is run. Policies set out the kaupapa and the tikanga of the group, the core values and principles. They are essential for good decision making and they provide an agreed way of operating and behaving.

Policies apply to all areas of work within the organisation and they apply to all those involved in the work of the organisation including users of the service, volunteers, staff, management and governance.

Policies help everyone to know what to expect and how to address issues and concerns, they provide clarity around roles and boundaries, they provide a framework for governing your organisation, they provide a degree of protection and lower the risk when something goes wrong, they help to communicate the values of the organisation both internally and externally, and they help to define where the organisation stands on an issue, for example: 'This organisation will not accept funds generated from gambling' or 'this organisation is committed to operating according to the Treaty of Waitangi'.

"Healthy organisations have healthy open processes and policies, which reflect the culture of the organisation, expectations and processes, eliminate confusion, assist progress and provide accountability" (North Shore Community and Social Services 2007).

Policies are important because they help to keep people safe. There are policies that are compulsory for example the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992.

It is important to find out what you need to have for the type of organisation and type of work you do. A policy is a broad statement which provides a mandate for the operation of the organisation.

Some policies also need to have a set of procedures that outline how the policy will be actioned. It is important to try and keep policies and procedures as clear and simple as possible so that they are accessible and understandable to everyone. The governing body normally formulates policy and the management team are responsible for implementing them. It is quite common for management to develop the procedures that sit underneath the policy. But it is important to involve everyone from service users to management in the development of your policies and procedures. These are the people who will be implementing or will be affected by the policies you develop.

Every organisation is different and will require a set of policies and procedures developed specifically to suit their service.



Social Services Waikato

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Example Policy

Here is an example of some basic policies and procedures that most organisations will need to have to operate safely and effectively.

Board/committee policies

- Code of ethics
- Meeting procedures
- Conflict of interest
- Terms of office

Financial management policies

- General Accounting
- Funds Management
- Capital Expenditure
- Internal Controls

Personnel policies and procedures

- Sexual Harassment
- Complaints
- Time in Lieu
- Volunteer agreement
- Employment
- Reserve

Organisational procedures

- Occupational health and safety
- Personal safety
- Internet and email use
- Vehicle use
- Privacy
- Emergency and evacuation

This is an example of a simple policy template.

Policy type	Personnel policies
Policy title	Smoking
Policy statement	“This workplace is a smokefree zone”
Procedures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Signs will be posted advising staff and service users that this is a smoke free zone. 2. Anyone found to be smoking on site will be asked to leave by the senior staff member present. 3. All hire or rental agreements for use of the premises will include a clause stating that the users agree to this policy.
Date developed	01/01/001
Review date	02/02/002

For further information about the development of policies and procedures for your organisation you can go online to view the Community Resource Kit at www.community.net.nz or you can request a CD of the kit from Social Services Waikato.

For advice and support in developing or reviewing your policies you can contact the Social Service Waikato Advisory Services team by phoning 07 838 1583 or email jane@ssw.org.nz. We have placed some policy examples on our website www.ssw.org.nz



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