

Capability Reviews – How to Guide

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1 Introduction and use of the Guide

1.1 Introduction

This guide, and the associated tools, templates and samples, are intended to be a repository for best practice execution of the activities required to complete a successful capability review.

It can be used as part of inducting new team members into the objectives and processes of the review; it is also intended to be used as a reference document throughout the review and a key part of the quality assurance methods for the PMDU team.

Following the guidance should enable a review to be conducted effectively and to the quality expected of the PMDU team. Nevertheless, it is recognised that each department, and review, will have different characteristics and as such review teams should bespoke the processes, inputs and outputs as required, while remaining on track with the overall objectives. However, each team has headroom to innovate and improve within the parameters set out in the guidance. It is the team's responsibility to keep a clear focus on the need for each review to deliver the three C's in terms of process, method and outputs: co-ordination, consistency and comparability.

A written guide can only do so much. It brings structure and organisation to this process. It can help guide teams through an intensive pressurised exercise where the stakes are high. But it is also important that each team remembers that they learn both from what has gone before, so they should look to people who know "how to" from previous reviews but also through sharing, comparing and challenging the way each other team in the tranche works. To this extent "how to" do a capability review must always be viewed as "work in progress".

So, this guide can only go so far in capturing the experience and learning that each team generates as the programme moves forward. This guide brings structure, branding and a core consistency to the product that is a capability review. It offers each team, the civil service and ultimately Gus O'Donnell assurance on this point.

However, it is the way the individuals that make up the PMDU team work with each other, with their review team members and with the host departments that increases the chances of a review delivering the holy trinity of a clear and evidenced diagnosis, the key actions that address that diagnosis and a willingness, desire and drive in the department to deliver the improvements required.

It is highly recommended that the Review Managers from each Tranche keep in close contact with each other throughout the review – especially if the departments work together on any agendas - but particularly from the fieldwork phase onwards where you will want to start sharing any common lines of enquiry and testing evidence against assessments.

If it becomes clear that a couple of departments have similar challenges e.g. difficulties managing complex delivery chains then those Review Managers might find it helpful to meet with another around the time of the WIP 3 and before internal moderation to check how the story lines are building, what evidence is available and how the scores might emerge. This avoids difficulties at the pre-internal moderation.

It is also suggested that the analysts and administrators network – this can be done effectively as a virtual community – if you have tried something new which works then share this with your colleagues. If you haven't done something before then ask your colleagues for advice or materials; the chances are someone probably has done it before. For this to work everyone has to contribute!

This is the second version of the How to Guide frozen for the fourth tranche of reviews. Additional material and revisions as a result of ongoing learning will be incorporated into a third version for the fifth tranche. As such there is an expectation that each team will capture the next round of best practice that will be reflected in the next version of this document.

1.2 Use of the Guide

This guide is structured into an overview section and detailed sections on each of the workstreams associated with a review.

The **overview section** is intended to enable team members to understand how workstreams fit together and progress during the course of a review.

The **detailed sections** look at each of the workstreams individually.

Within each section, the following aspects of the workstream are discussed:

- Objectives of this task (What is the intention/key questions for this workstream?)
- Inputs (What information is needed to answer the questions?)
- Process – general points and set pieces
- Tips and tactics
- Outputs (What is needed at the end of the activities)

Please note that this guide provides information on how the main objectives of the workstreams in the review and guidance on how to approach and structure the activities within them, however it is *not intended to provide detailed project planning in terms of timelines, effort or resources allocated to activities.*

This guide is intended to be an umbrella document for use alongside the best practice tools, templates and samples held by the Capability Review team. **These are referenced in the appendix and can be found at xxxx.**

2 Overview of the Capability Review

The capability reviews have a number of concurrent workstreams to be managed.

DN Placeholder draft diagram.

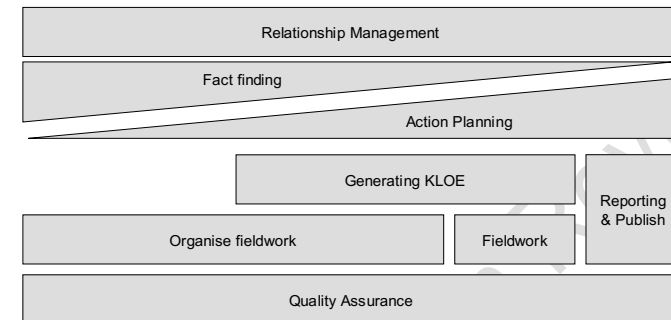


Figure 1- Capability Review Overview

Relationship Management

Building and maintaining positive working relationships with RTMs, the host Department review team and key review stakeholders in order to carry out an effective review. This is both in terms of insight obtained and ensuring ownership of achievable, measurable and transforming actions by the department.

Fact finding

Initially, RTM and PMDU orientation in the objectives, strategy, structure, organisation and day to day activities of the department. During the course of the pre-fieldwork stage focusing on an understanding of the strengths and challenges for the department and the current and projected issues that they face.

Action Planning

Ensuring that the department is ready to accept the challenges it faces and action the improvements required. By engaging with the department early and often, and supporting its team in drafting and creating ownership throughout the department for the action plan.

Generating Key Lines of Enquiry

Initially using all inputs available during fact finding to identify key issues for the department. Refining these to ensure that only critical issues are taken forward, and that the line of enquiry itself is focused and measurable. Analysis during fieldwork as to the causes of these in relation to the elements of capability.

Organising and conducting fieldwork

Ensuring that the activities undertaken during the fieldwork enable RTMs to confirm and explore KLOE, gather evidence required to complete an assessment and scoring of the department, and gather information in support of action planning.

Reporting and Publishing

DN Input required from PT

Quality Assurance

Ensuring compliance, consistency and comparability across all the reviews in the programme.

3 Relationship Management

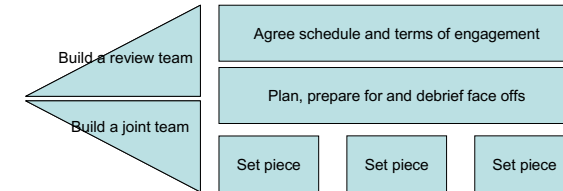


Figure 2- Relationship Management - key activities

3.1 Objectives of this task (What is the intention/key questions for this workstream?)

Objectives of relationship building

- To build good working relationships with review team members and to set patterns for the rest of the review
- To build good working relationships with the board that will increase the likelihood of our recommendations being accepted

Key Questions to answer

- How can we best induct review team members?
- What are the top tips for bringing RTMs on board?
- How do we manage the relationship with board to ensure maximum buy-in,
- How do we get the most from set pieces

3.2 Inputs (What information is needed to answer the questions?)

- RTMs in place
- Effective face-offs in the department

3.3 Process – general points and set pieces

3.3.1 Build a review Team

- Put effort into building a joint RTM / PMDU review team, use joint orientation visits, initial conversations, workshops to your advantage here. Refer to the guidance that Esther has produced on 'Building a review team'
- Orientate the review team with the department, make it easy for them by providing documents and setting up visits
- Set patterns early, expect RTMs to attend workshops, interviews, field visits etc
- Run joint KLOE WIP sessions to share ideas

- It has proved beneficial for the administrator (with analyst) to have face to face meetings at the outset with the reviewers PA's (where practical i.e. if London based) to start the 6 month relationship off well. There are many diary changes ahead make friends early it will be easier to ask for favours later!

3.3.2 Initial set-up sessions with face-offs

- Ensure that those attending meetings are well briefed on any key points
- Engage the department in agreeing the RTMs in good time
- Work through the generic approach to a review with the department and tweak where necessary to ensure it is fit for purpose
- Be clear about who does what throughout and assuage fears by showing the detail of the different phases
- Set them up for the long journey, their work (making the improvements) really starts when the report is nearing publication

3.3.3 Set Pieces with the Board

- The initial session for the RTMs will be important for building credibility, ensure that RTMs are well briefed and that all are clear on the purpose of the session
- There will be opportunities to playback to the board at various intervals, it is important that we approach these sessions with a clear design and that we engage the board in advance to ensure that they are happy with our approach.
- By the time that we get to action planning the board should be leading us towards actions, it's important that we set this pattern early, and that this session is co-designed to ensure a transfer of ownership

3.4 Tips and tactics

- Taking the review team for a dinner has proved an effective way for people to get to know one another and to begin to build a team
- Having adequate sessions with the department to ensure that they have clarity of the process and where they own it is key
- Some departments have used what we have called Reference Groups. These are a collection of people from across the department who the reviewers may use as a sounding board and who the department may use as a task force post review. Here are some guidelines on the composition of a reference group and how you might work with them.
 - Composition
 - No more than 12-15 people
 - Range of grades HEO/SEO (B2) - G3 (Director)
 - Range of geographical locations (not a London centric group)
 - Good gender balance if possible

NB: Some departments may already have think tanks/task forces in existence and so they may well be a ready made Reference group - alternatively you might not want to use their usual suspects

 - How to engage them
 - Use them early - get them to paint a picture of the department for you from different perspectives e.g. what's it feel like here (challenges, successes); get them to give you the back-story. In Defra we asked them to produce a timeline covering the last five years (including the key events mapped out).
 - Use them later (at the end of the workshop phase) to test the emerging findings?

- If the group is good (NB: the RTMs are likely to comment on this after their first meeting) you might want to encourage the department to engage with them further (e.g. as action plan task force x-ref DFES model). Other departments (x-ref Home Office) used them extensively and they were in on board feedback sessions.

3.5 Outputs (What is needed at the end of the activities)

- Conditions are in place for the department to engage with the issues and own their resolution
- Review Team are aligned to our requirements

4 Fact Finding

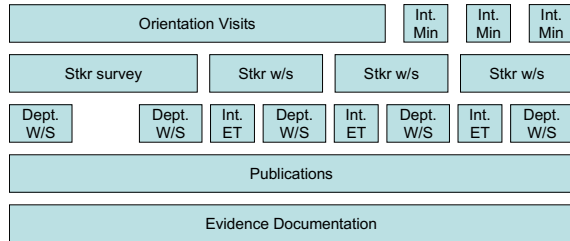


Figure 3- Fact finding - key activities

4.1 Objectives of this task (What is the intention/key questions for this work stream?)

- What is the nature of the Department's business?
- Orientation regarding the size/structure/organisation/recent context of the Department.
- Understanding of issues facing the Department and what they find challenging.
- Opportunities for illustrative case studies to be used during the review.
- Inform decisions regarding KLOE.

4.2 Inputs (What information is needed to answer the questions?)

- Department's self assessment
- Documentation
- RTM availability – creation of schedule

4.3 Process – general points and set pieces

4.3.1 Orientation visits

How many of these you will require will depend on the organisational and geographical spread of the Department. Things to consider including in the visit:

- View of the front line operations of a department.
- Discussion with customers of the department.
- Discussion with any local delivery partners.
- Tour of the facilities.
- Discussion with local top teams.

NB: The purpose of the visits made prior to the fieldwork is about understanding the territory and information gathering. These are distinguishable from the visits made during fieldwork when the focus is on the case study being pursued and the key lines of enquiry – reviewers are then looking for specific evidence to triangulate.

4.3.2 Workshops with Department staff

There are 4 set piece workshops to conduct with the department – please see appendix for sample running orders and agendas for these sessions.

Workshop 1 – 'Back story', agenda, challenges, issues.

Workshop 2 – What's good, positive aspects of the Department.

Workshop 3 – Self assessments (grade 3s)

Workshop 4 – Self assessments (grade 3s, 5s and 7s)

There are additional workshops that can be conducted with the department, if appropriate.

Workshop 5 – Corporate services

Workshop 6 – 'Playback' – testing lines of enquiry to date

Workshop 7 – Delivery chain workshop - testing perceptions of dept 'core' with the NDPBs, Agencies and other arms length bodies that delivery the policy agenda.

Workshop 8 – Workshops with stakeholders – see 4.3.3. below:

These workshop outlines do not need to be followed slavishly for example during one review the 'what's good' workshop was dropped as a single event but the content was designed into workshops 1-5 to provide more of a balance for the participants.

It is not necessary to have more than 2 RTMs at each workshop – be wary of using up too much of their time hearing repeated stories.

One way of maximising the RTMs time especially those based outside London is to run two workshops on one day. That way you will also save room set up time.

4.3.3 Workshops with stakeholders

There are 4 different groups of stakeholders who can provide a perspective on both the capability of the department and more specifically their relationship and interfaces with them - please see appendix for sample running orders and agendas for these sessions.

Central stakeholder workshop – attendees from central government; CO, HMT, No 10, NAO, CDG, BRE.

Delivery Partners workshop – attendees from departments that work with the department under review.

Other Government Departments workshop - testing perceptions of colleagues who work with the Department on joint initiatives

External stakeholders workshop – attendees from groups from outside of government, working with the department (consider the 'top 10-15' from the stakeholder survey list).

4.3.4 Interviews with executive team

These are intended to be a two way session with RTMs; a chance to get an initial view from the executive team members regarding their challenges and views on the department but also a chance for the executive team members to discuss with the RTMs the nature of the review and any concerns that they may have (see Relationship Management).

It is useful for the PMDU to prepare a briefing back prior to the interview with information about the interviewees and potential areas for discussion.

As this is an initial interview, and there will be a second during the fieldwork, not more one hour should be necessary.

4.3.5 Interviews with Ministers

As with the executive team, these are intended to be a two way session. It is particularly important for the RTMs to have a good feel for the expectations of the Ministers with regards to the review and its findings. Any divergences from these expectations will need to be explained in order to ensure buy-in for the report.

Again, a briefing pack should be prepared and the duration of the interview does not need to be more than one hour.

4.4 Tips and tactics

- The early creation and freezing of the schedule of the fact finding events is key to lowering the overhead associated with managing through them. Ensure that you make your Department aware of the general requirements while you collect RTM availability. Once you have RTM availability agree times for events within the PMDU team and confirm with the Department at the earliest opportunity. Once confirmed with the department confirm with RTMs to prevent them realising that time. Whole turnaround for this can only be a few days as the RTMs cannot hold their diaries for any length of time.
- Work with the Department to agree this, face to face is best, and followed by exchange of schedule drafts to ensure the same understanding.
- We have agreed for 20 days from RTMs. Need approx a 70-30 split of the 10 days required outside of field work. Bear in mind that we do ask for a good deal of pre-reading/evidence write up so refraining from using the full allocation in actual fact finding activities is fairest.
- It is also important to remember that you will need to deploy RTM time post fieldwork for the activities listed below. Many RTMs feel they have a lot of knowledge and experience to share following this activity but to make the most of this it is important to engage them early before their knowledge (and enthusiasm) slips away:
 - To attend Board meeting (and any preparation meeting) at which the assessment is presented by the reviewers to the board
 - To attend Board meeting at which the action plan is presented by the Board to the reviewers
 - There may be a request (from the dept) or offer (from the reviewers) to assist the Board to develop the plan – this would be a beneficial activity
 - WIP 4 – to assess the action plan and considered assurance of delivery at 3 months
 - For 1 RTM to attend an internal moderation meeting
 - For 1 RTM to attend the external moderation meeting
 - For 1 RTM to be on standby for the media on the day of publication
 - For 1 or 2 RTMs to be prepared to present to the SCS of the Dept or the Delivery Chain senior execs and possibly the Reference Group

4.5 Outputs (What is needed at the end of the activities)

- Write ups of orientation visits for recording and sharing across RTMs purposes.
- Write ups of workshops with Department for clarification with attendees.
- Write ups of workshops with stakeholders for clarification with attendees.
- Evidence records written up by team covering all documentation, visits and interviews conducted.
- Evidence input into collection tool for analysis.
- An emerging 3 page 'elevator story' – this will become a work in progress throughout the review.

[Please see appendix for examples of these outputs.]

5 Action Planning Pre-Publication

5.1 Objectives of this task (What is the intention/ are the key questions for this workstream?)

- For the department to set its direction in response to the findings of the review, to develop a detailed action plan, including performance measures, that is represented in a template that can be subsequently used in assurance and which the department publishes following publication
- To summarise the action plan for inclusion in the published report in the form of the permanent secretaries response
- For the Review Team (PMDU & RTMs) to assure the quality of the departmental action plan, ensuring that it responds adequately to the issues raised by the capability review, that it is fit for purpose and that it is a SMART action plan (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely)

5.2 Inputs (What information is needed to answer the questions?)

- Review needs to have been undertaken and feedback to the board prepared.
- Board need to be ready to receive the feedback, we have understood the coalition and briefed appropriately.
- RTMs should have a view on solutions that can be readily shared with the board, these should have been trailed with staff during fieldwork. A WIP on solutions should have been conducted.
- Key departmental contacts should have identified people that they will use to take forward the development of an action plan. Often this will be the reference group.
- PMDU / Departmental Key Contact must have discussed action planning and prepared a plan for the department to use which both are content with.
- PS, Board, key Contacts and RTMs must understand the purpose, approach to and their role in action planning in advance of feedback to the board

5.3 Process – general points

5.3.1 How the department prepares its action plan

Each department will be in a different place when it comes to action planning. We may have assessed that the department delivers change extremely well, in which case we may need to do little work, in other cases managing and delivering change will be a weakness and we will need to have a much greater hands on involvement. Equally there are many ways that a department may choose to engage with staff e.g. focus groups, workshops, documents emailed for comment etc.

The key thing is that we are a part of the planning process the PMDU team must assure the department's action planning process and decide whether this is fit for purpose. Equally we must be a part of the action planning process, the PMDU and RTMs must assure the departmental action plan and say whether they feel it is fit for purpose.

5.3.2 Preparation for Action Planning

This phase includes activities to ensure that we have the right inputs for action planning and that we have a board coalition mentally ready to accept the issues faced and move to solutions and action planning. Make sure that the following takes place

- Board, key contacts in the department and RTMs are briefed earlier in the review on what action planning is and what their role in making it a success is
- PMDU team and key contact(s) from the department work up an approach for action planning that is fit for purpose and which the department can run with, also discuss potential departmental skills gaps or areas where additional expertise from the centre would prove valuable.

- The key contacts begin preparing the ground for action planning within the department, this could be through the reference group in identifying the right people to engage with on particular issues or in pre-scheduling activities
- The PMDU review team should engage with the hub (Esther Wallington) to source the extra skills needed as highlighted in the second bullet above
- RTMs should think through the solutions to the issues that are emerging and that these are tested and expanded through a dedicated WIP session (WIP 2 ½)
- The PMDU and the key departmental contact should work up communications messages that can be shared with staff

5.4 Process – Minimum process activities, the must do

Note: if you feel the department is ready to move quickly from feedback to action planning then you could consider combining the first two activities into one longer session with the board.

5.4.1 Final Feedback to the departmental board

At this session the Review Team members feedback their findings to the full departmental board (including non-execs). Typically, the session would include feedback on the process that has been undertaken and the basis of the findings, an overview of the key areas for action (lines of enquiry) and the assessment of the department against the model of capability including scores. Further discussion would then ensue, it is suggested that the choreography of this discussion is prepared in advance in conjunction with departmental face offs. Previous reviews suggest that 2-3 hrs is required for this session.

This session typically occurs at the end of the feedback to the board.

NB: This is the reviewers' opportunity to deliver their messages to the board as starkly as they might want to; there will not be a better opportunity than this. Once the words start to go down on paper the tone and directness will be changed to one that is considered publishable.

5.4.2 Board Key Priorities Session

Having received and digested the feedback the board needs to rapidly establish what it intends to do to respond to the feedback. In order to ensure collective ownership and to maintain momentum it is suggested that the board hold a session for between 2.5 hours and half a day within a week of the board feedback. Good practice would suggest that the session should be externally facilitated, preferably by a coach to the board and that the board should invite the Review Team and the Reference group (if there is one) to join the discussion if only in part. It is likely that the agenda would include a reminder of the key messages from the Review Team Feedback, an opportunity for further questions (though these should be tabled in advance), a chance for the Review Team and the Reference Group to feedback their thoughts on potential solutions (these should have been shared in writing in advance). There would then follow a discussion between the board of their intended course of action (the reference group and review team might leave at this point, or may remain to answer clarification questions), at the end there should be a summing up by the board attended by a representative of the review team and the reference group (or others that the department has identified to carry forward the work). An additional area for the agenda may be a review of a communication message to be cascaded to staff, the message would contain a high level summary of the findings of the review.

NB: Whilst Reviewer attendance at this board meeting cannot be imposed, the potential is that the board misinterpret some of the messages delivered to them and/or do not hit the right level of interventions in the development of the implementation plan.

5.4.3 Communication with staff

Engaging with staff in the action planning phase will be critical to the eventual delivery of improvement in the department. Lessons learned from phase 1 suggest that devoting time to communication following the board key priorities session will pay dividends. In particular it will save time later in action planning. The key here will be identifying what can be shared in order to aid understanding whilst not compromising the published report.

5.4.4 Departmental Contacts / RTM Feedback Session

At least once during the action planning period we should provide RTMs to meet with departmental contacts, the purpose of the meeting would be for the department to feedback to the RTMs on the latest thinking on action planning and to use the opportunity to test emerging thinking. It is a good opportunity for the RTMs to share their ideas and to ensure that the department has fully understood the problem as they saw it. It is likely that the session would be hosted by the key departmental contacts, perhaps augmented by members of the reference group or others identified to take forward the work. Good practice would be for members of the PMDU review team to attend also. Good practice would be to undertake sessions of this nature more frequently than once.

5.4.5 Board / RTM Assurance Session

There must be at least one occasion when the board feedback to the RTMs on their action plan, if it takes place once it should be at the end of the process prior to WIP 4 and prior to the PS / GO'D bilateral. The purpose of this session is for the RTMs to quality assure the action plan, that it solves the problems that they identified during the review and that they feel the department has gone far enough. In addition the PMDU team must quality assure the action plan from the perspective of ongoing monitoring, is this action plan fit for that purpose. This session is a good chance for a visible hand over from the RTMs to the none-execs as people who will hold the department to account.

The department must share the papers for the session in advance (suggest 48 hours in advance) such that they can prepare questions.

Good practice would be to make the RTMs available for additional sessions with the department prior to this

5.4.6 WIP 4

WIP4 is a critical session, it is a chance for the RTMs to share their thinking on the quality of the action plan in advance of the bilateral between GO'D and the PS. The outputs of the session will provide a narrative that can be shared with GO'D and the PS in advance of the meeting.

5.4.7 GO'D PS bilateral

At the end of the process the PS will meet with GO'D for a bilateral meeting, the discussion will likely cover the report including the departmental response. It is important that the RTMs have had a chance to provide input to the meeting in the form of a written briefing to GO'D on their assurance of the action plan.

5.5 Roles and Responsibilities

5.5.1 Role of the Departmental Face Off

- Design the approach to action planning in conjunction with the PMDU team

- Develop communications to share with staff following the feedback to the board in consultation with the PMDU team
- Ensure an action plan is prepared
- Coordinate the activities that lead to the production of the action plan
- Ensure that the accountability for developing the action plan is spread across the board
- Communicate with staff and stakeholders following publication (preferably including the publication of the action plan)
- Put in place steps to ensure that the action plan is taken forward including the development of further more detailed plans as required over a longer time frame

• ASSURE THAT THE ACTION PLAN IS FIT FOR PURPOSE; THAT STAFF HAVE BEEN ENGAGED AND THAT THE PLAN CAN BE TAKEN FORWARD

5.5.2 Role of the PS and Board

- Establish the direction of the departmental response to the findings of the review and commission the production of its action plan
- Support the action planning process in the department, e.g. by acting as sponsors for particular strands of work
- Ensure the action plan is summarised to form the PS response
- Feedback to the RTMs on the action plan

• ASSURE THAT THE ACTION PLAN IS FIT FOR PURPOSE; THAT IT MEETS THE PRIORITIES AS SET DOWN BY THE BOARD.

5.5.3 Role of the NEDs

- Challenge the departments action plan and its readiness to deliver it
- Act as an ongoing conscience on departmental progress on action planning

5.5.4 Role of the Reference Group (if the review has set one up)

- Undertake action planning (perhaps)
- Identify others in the department that should be involved in the action planning process
- Act as a source of advice to the key departmental contacts

5.5.5 Role of the PMDU Team

- Work with the department to design the approach to action planning and assure the process
- Sign off departmental communication following the feedback to the board (work with the CR hub)
- Support the department in delivering communication messages
- Act as a conduit for questions from the department on a day by day basis, either answering them or passing them to an RTM
- Attend as many action planning activities as possible to get a sense of the conversation

• ASSURE THAT THE ACTION PLAN IS FIT FOR PURPOSE; THAT IT IS MEASUREABLE AND COMPARABLE FOR THE PURPOSE OF ONGOING ASSURANCE

5.5.6 Role of the RTMs

- Meet with the department to answer questions on the feedback to the board
- Meet with the department to provide input on solutions
- Meet with the department to test the departments action plan
- Ensure that the action plan responds to the challenges posed in the RTM feedback
- Ensure that the action plan is fit for purpose
- Feedback to the Cabinet Secretary in advance of his 1-2-1 with the permanent secretary on their assessment of the action plan and the departments readiness to deliver it

• ASSURE THAT THE ACTION PLAN IS FIT FOR PURPOSE; THAT IT RESPONDS TO THE ISSUES IDENTIFIED, THAT IT GOES FAR ENOUGH, THAT IT IS DELIVERABLE.

5.6 Tips and tactics

- Save 3-4 days of your 20 day allocation for action planning and report sign off
- Members of the PMDU team should stay on site throughout the action planning phase, we must be a visible part of the process
- Design the reference group with action planning in mind.
- Don't forget communication – you will need to work with the department to agree messages that can be delivered to staff (and stakeholders if appropriate)

• CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING AN ACTION PLAN – (Further detail on what a good action looks like and what a good measurement criteria will be available in the separate guidance document)

1. Priority accorded by the PS, Board and NEDs- are they taking it seriously?
2. Whether the actions are aligned with key action areas set out in the report
3. Whether the resources (people and/or cash) are available and whether the department has/is ready to deploy them
4. Whether the ambition and pace in the plan is balanced with realism about delivery
5. The level of engagement and understanding from staff and stakeholders
6. Clarity on the key success criteria, the key metrics and measures that allow the department to demonstrate they are improving
7. The department's mechanisms to monitor and follow through on progress including the role of the board and the NEDs

- Questions for you to pose to the department when your are co-designing their approach for developing an action plan
 - How do you propose to develop your action plan? What activities will you schedule?
 - Which sessions do you want the RTMs to attend?
 - When you have achieved improvement in the past how have you done it?

- Are you good at delivering improvement, making plans, building ownership amongst staff, delivering the plans? If not – have you considered other ways of doing things?
- Do you have a leadership coach who could run some sessions with the board to develop your response to our findings?
- Based on these key lines of enquiry who must you involve to develop a solution that is deliverable? (a reference group can help through the review but particularly in action planning)
- How will you ensure that the board has corporate ownership of the action plan
- How do you propose to ensure that staff are engaged with the action plan and feel a sense of ownership for its delivery?
- When will we schedule meetings between the RTMs and yourselves for them to test the action plan?
- When will the RTMs meet with the board to discuss the action plan? How often? How will we ensure that the RTMs officially assure the quality of the action plan?
- Given the key lines of enquiry which we have what skills gaps do you envisage and are there are areas where we can search for external expertise and knowledge to assist you?
- Good practice is that the action plan be published; will you publish your action plan?
- How do you plan to monitor whether you are delivering the necessary improvements?
- We are strongly recommending that the non-executive directors have a role to play as a conscience for the board on progress against your action plan. Are you happy with this?
- Once we have delivered our findings it will be important to quickly share some feedback with staff. When shall we work this up?
- We have contacted a lot of people during this review (staff and stakeholders), how will you update them on what you are doing?
- When are the planned sessions, I want to attend?
- Questions to be posed by the RTMs when quality assuring the action plan
 - Does this action plan clearly respond to the issues which I identified and fed back to the board?
 - Is this action plan fit for purpose? Does it go far enough?
 - Am I confident that in implementing this action plan the department will deliver a step change?
 - Can the department deliver this action plan?
 - What further help does the department need if it is to succeed?
- Questions to be posed by the PMDU when quality assuring the action plan
 - Is this action plan sufficiently precise that performance against it can be measured?
 - Am I satisfied with the quality of the performance measures contained within the action plan?
 - Does the action plan meet the guidelines set down for the assurance process?
 - What further help does this department need if it is to succeed?
 - Are the non-executive directors positioned to hold the department to account for the delivery of this action plan?
- Action Planning should have the following in order to make it a success
 - Leaders setting the direction for the department
 - The Permanent Secretary retains overall ownership allocating individuals who are accountable for delivering the improvement
 - The department has a plan in place that will allow it to resource the improvement

- The department engages the wider department & stakeholders (where necessary / appropriate) in the design of solutions, thus making a smooth implementation more likely
- PMDU engaged with the department in creating the approach to action planning, in discussion with the department on the
- The action plan is specific, tangible and measurable

5.7 Outputs (What is needed at the end of the activities)

- An action plan which is completed in the template provided by the PMDU and which meets the requirements set by the PMDU for assurance. The department should publish it's action plan following the publication of the report
- Summary of the action plan provided in the form of the permanent secretaries response
- Ownership of the action plan by the department, board owning the plan, wider department engaged with it
- Plans in motion to ensure the action plan is fully resourced at a detailed level

5.8 Supporting Materials – these can be found in the tools section

- Action Planning template for which will be used for assurance and which the department will complete
- Guidelines for PMDU team and RTMs to use to establish whether an action plan is fit for purpose and can be used in the assurance process
- Example of a communication message used by a tranche 1 department
- Example of Q&A posted by a tranche 1 department for staff
- Sample timetable from the DCLG review including overview of additional activities
- Lessons learned from Phase 1

6 Generating Key Lines of Enquiry

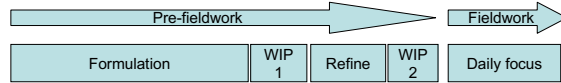


Figure 4-Generating KLOE - key activities

6.1 Objectives of this task (What is the intention/key questions for this workstream?)

- To generate Lines of Enquiry, which are then refined to Key Lines of Enquiry for the review.
- Lines of Enquiry** are intended to be the issues the department raises about itself, the issues the review team will want to reflect back to the department, they are things the department will find recognisable as being the big issues it struggles with.

6.2 Inputs (What information is needed to answer the questions?)

- The RTMs will need to have completed some element of 'Fact finding' to complete this activity effectively. The KLOE should be based on what the review team are hearing, seeing and reading about the department, its strengths, its developments areas and the things it finds difficult.

6.3 Process – general points and set pieces

6.3.1 Work In Progress session 1

Initial lines of enquiry are developed at the Work in Progress 1 session. This should be scheduled for phase 3 of the pre-fieldwork stage in order to ensure that RTMs have undertaken sufficient fact finding activities. The session will need to span a half day and have maximum RTM attendees. Where possible it should be facilitated by a PMDU person from outside the Review team in order to allow the PMDU review team to focus on content and as part of the quality assurance methods of the wider CR team.

The session consists of the following three activities

- Team download. A facilitated round table download from individual review team members covering three questions;
 - the activities they have been involved with
 - what has impressed them
 - what are their headline and emerging thoughts about what they have heard, seen and read
- Getting to a shared state. A facilitated round table discussion where the team discuss, challenge and review what they have heard from their colleagues that focuses on identifying and grouping the composite initial lines of enquiry they need to cover
- Working assessment score. The review team members work their way through the capability model awarding initial assessment scores and the headline reasons for these scores in order to get an initial sense of the departments strengths and weaknesses and inform where the team should be focusing its attention.

The role of the PMDU team is to capture the discussion in a way that allows them to write it up and play it back to the review team. This enables the RTMs to work from a shared, agreed and understood working script of the initial lines of enquiry during the next phase of the review.

6.3.2 Work in Progress session 2

Key lines of enquiry are initially developed at the Work in Progress 2 session. This should be scheduled for the end of phase 3 of the pre-fieldwork stage in order to ensure that RTMs have an agreed focus prior to commencing fieldwork. Timings and facilitation will follow WIP 1.

The session consists of the following three activities

- Team download. A brief roundtable update of the more recent activities that each RTM has been involved in and any highlights.
- Refinement of the assessment and scores generated in WIP 1. RTMs should split into 3 groups to look at each of the areas of the model in more depth. They should focus on providing the following;
 - Revised assessment against each of the elements.
 - Revised score for each of the elements.
 - View of how strong the evidence base is for each/where more evidence is needed.
- Prioritisation and refinement of KLOE from WIP 1. As a group, the RTMs need to prioritise Key Lines from the Initial Lines. They should aim for no more than 6 KLOE to start the fieldwork in order to maintain focus and provide sufficient depth to the review. The KLOE will need to be refined to ensure that the lines are focused and measurable.

6.3.3 Ongoing activities and further Work in Progress sessions

It should be noted that the task of adjusting initial lines of enquiry and refining these into key lines of enquiry is an ongoing one through the review.

It is recommended that progress against the KLOE are reviewed daily during the fieldwork phase of the review so the team are well prepared for the final WIP 3 session and the playback rehearsal session, where the focus will be more strongly on what the investigation, as focused by the KLOE has revealed about the department's capability

6.4 Tips and tactics

- The team needs to ensure that after it has developed its initial lines of enquiry, its subsequent refinement of this group to key lines of enquiry, covers the big issues where improvement must focus if the department is to be in a position to make a step change in performance. They must also ensure that they are "covering the ground" and that they have enough evidence to cross reference and assess against the capability methodology
- Remember that the KLOE are a prism through which to explore the capability of the department. They should be real and critical issues for the department; however, the capability review is not intended to resolve these issues independently of investigating what they say about the department's capability.

6.5 Outputs (What is needed at the end of the activities)

- A shortlist of KLOE with which to commence the fieldwork period.

7 Organising and conducting fieldwork

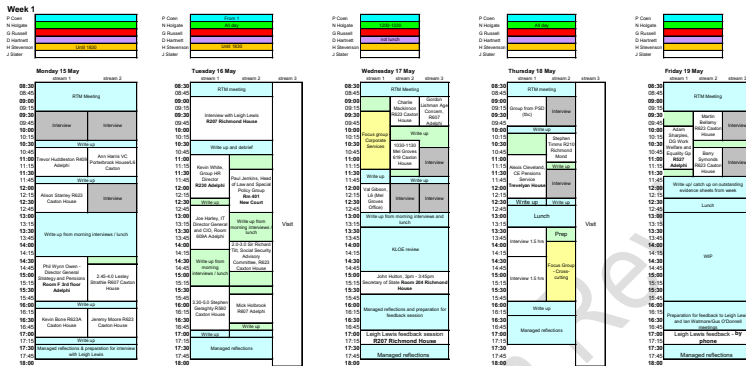


Figure 5- Organising and conducting fieldwork - example week schedule plan

7.1 Objectives of this task (What is the intention/key questions for this workstream?)

- Confirm and explore KLOE.
- Gather evidence required to complete assessment (including scoring) of the department's capability.
- Gather information for consideration in action planning.

7.2 Inputs (What information is needed to answer the questions?)

- Confirmed schedule for the two weeks.
- Provisional KLOE.
- Provisional assessment and scores.

7.3 Process – general points and set pieces

7.3.1 Organise fieldwork

There is a basic structure for the fieldwork two weeks, however teams should revise this as required in order to address the KLOE and areas for concern that they have going into the period. **The generic structure can be found in the appendix.**

Teams should agree the basic structure with the host departments at the earliest opportunity. Interviews with the executive board or ministers in particular will need advance planning.

The first week of the field work can be planned in advance, this should be agreed with the department at least three weeks prior to fieldwork in order for the appropriate attendees and logistical details to be organised.

The second week will need to have significant flexibility built into it in order to allow RTMs to focus on areas that have either been raised as a result of the first week or have not been answered to date. This position will need to be managed with the department.

7.3.2 Carry out fieldwork

The two weeks fieldwork should be managed by following the agreed schedule. Some points to bear in mind when doing so include:

- Ensure that evidence is written up as RTMs complete events. Not all attendees need to write separate evidence, one scribe and others reviewing is more manageable in terms of both collection and analysis.
- Ensure focus during the WIP sessions on completing an assessment and scoring and identifying any gaps in the evidence base.
- Maximise the number of PMDU team on site (or across sites if the department is split) in order to provide support for both the RTMs and department. The PMDU team should have daily catch ups apart from the RTMs in order to ensure that the process and logistics are on plan.
- Draft the assessment and report as the fieldwork progresses. It can be constantly amended.
- Manage the host department's experience carefully. The two weeks will be demanding for their review team and others involved and yet we need to continue to build on the relationship as we head into action planning (see Relationship Management section).

7.3.3 Analyse and re-cut evidence

As RTMs will be filling out evidence sheets after each 'event' (interview, focus group or workshop) the PMDU team needs to keep the evidence base in the tool current. If RTMs are not entering directly into the database then time needs to be allowed for PMDU team members to update regularly.

The current evidence base allows the RTMs to have access to all evidence previously collected on any given KLOE or element. "Reports" may be generated from this to provide different cuts of evidence to provide this.

The PMDU team should also spend time analysing the evidence base for gaps and inconsistencies to be followed up with future events or considered as part of the assessment.

7.4 Tips and tactics

- From the outset check the amount of availability that each of the RTMs has during the two weeks. Though they have agreed the amount of time, there may be some critical events that they have not been able to move.
- Both weeks should have time built into them to allow the RTMs to both plan for and reflect on events as a group.
- One PMDU team member should assume ownership of the master schedule and liaison with both the RTMs' secretaries and the host department in order to ensure accurate versioning and communication.
- One PMDU team member should assume ownership of the master db in order to prevent corruption and confusion with version control.

7.5 Outputs (What is needed at the end of the activities)

- Evidence records written up by team covering all documentation, visits and interviews conducted.
- Evidence input into collection tool for analysis.
- "Reports" of evidence as required by RTMs throughout the process.

Please see appendix for examples of these outputs.

8 Reporting and Publishing

DN – Section awaiting input from Peter Thomas



Figure 6- Reporting and Publishing - key activities

8.1 Objectives of this task (What is the intention/key questions for this workstream?)

- To get to the point of publishing a report that has been agreed by the Department, RTMs, Ian Watmore and Gus O'Donnell.
- To ensure that the Department is comfortable with the actions required by the report.

8.2 Inputs (What information is needed to answer the questions?)

- Completed pre-fieldwork and fieldwork activities.
- Comprehensive evidence database for reference.
- Agreed KLOE for structure.
- Agreed scores.

8.3 Process – general points and set pieces

8.3.1 RTMs' complete assessment and scoring.

8.3.2 PMDU team draft Review Team Findings Report for RTM review and agreement.

8.3.3 RTM report delivered to Department (via Board Meeting and other vehicles as required)

8.3.4 Department undertakes action planning and agrees action plan and improvement trajectory

8.3.5 Combined RTM assessment and Department action plan agreed by main stakeholders

8.3.6 Report available for publishing

8.4 Tips and tactics

- While RTMs will have been meeting regularly with the Department PS to ensure that he understands their direction and findings, it may be useful to speak with members of the top team in smaller groups prior to the board feedback session in order to test the messages with them and begin to move them along the change curve.
- In principle we seek outputs that are:

- Evidence based – not just opinions, evidence collected externally as well as internally, evidence which as far as possible that pre-exists, and evidence that is properly benchmarked
- Outputs which are objectively assessed, scored and moderated
- Recommendations and key actions which are practical, stretching and trajectory driven
- And an overall review set in the wider context of the journey that each department is on

8.5 Outputs (What is needed at the end of the activities)

8.5.1 From the Review Team

- Review Team Findings Record. Deck that contains the RTMs' assessment of the Department including; context, current and future delivery challenges, delivery track record, assessment of capability, standing against PSG and conclusions for areas for action.
- Feedback and handout to top team. Oral feedback covering same content as findings record, though further expanded as required. May be accompanied by a speaking note for top team record.
- Feedback to Cabinet Secretary. Oral briefing includes additional reflections for input into performance appraisal of permanent secretary and development of top team.
- View on Action Plan. Focusing on whether the action plan should impact the assessment ratings and more broadly the adequacy of the Department's response.

8.5.2 From the Department

- Action Plan and improvement trajectory. Deck that outlines the Department's response to the RTMs' assessment and the trajectory for the actions being undertaken, e.g. by six month checkpoint stages.

8.5.3 From the PMDU

- Published report. Refined as a result of the early action planning phase, this is word document based that is signed off by the Permanent Secretary, Ian Watmore and Gus O'Donnell.
- Note that reports remain draft until the PMDU has moderated them across the other reports from the tranche.
- Note that whilst we seek formal sign off from the RTMs, the report is PMDU's from the point it goes into the Cabinet Secretary.

9 Quality Assurance

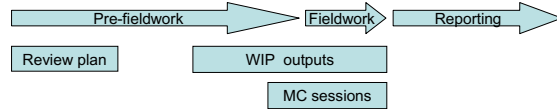


Figure 7- Quality Assurance - key activities

9.1 Objectives of this task (What is the intention/key questions for this workstream?)

- The QA process focuses on ensuring compliance, consistency and comparability across all of the reviews in the programme. It will specifically apply these to:

Process	Checking that each team meets the minimum requirements of a capability review.
Method	Checking that each team is covering each element of the capability model.
Evidence	Checking that each team is generating and managing the evidence that supports the reviews team's working judgements as they work through the process.
Judgements	Checking that each team is ensuring that its judgements are supported by evidence.
Assessment	Checking that each team is ensuring that its judgements are consistent with capability assessment criteria <u>and</u> these are comparable with judgements and assessments made by other teams.
Reporting	
Relationship management	Checking that each team is managing its relationship with the department in a way that ensures that there will be ownership of the diagnosis, the key actions and the improvement required to deliver these actions.

9.2 Inputs (What information is needed to answer the questions?)

- Outputs from all activities to be made available to the PMDU CR QA team as required.
- Discussions to be held with PMDU CR QA team as required.

9.3 Process – general points and set pieces

9.3.1 A fieldwork session with “mission control”

To be held in the week prior to the team going on site (week 0).

This will test whether the team's state of readiness for the on site phase, including the balance between evidence collection, collation and synthesise by the team

9.3.2 A rehearsal session with “Mission Control”

To be held during the second week of fieldwork (week 2) prior to the feedback session with the board.

This will look at how the RTMs will playback the team's conclusions to the department's leadership team, what they will say and the way they will say it and looks ahead to the Gus O' Donnell session. This session will also look at the comparability of judgements and assessment scores across the tranche.

9.4 Tips and tactics

- The QA process aims to take a proportionate, risk based approach. It reflects the recognition that each review team will need to bespoke their approach according to the department being reviewed and the issues that are identified.
- The 3 Cs test is easier if
 - teams stay in contact with the mission control function through the regular Thursday afternoon review sessions,
 - share tips, techniques and learning with their colleagues in the tranche,
 - stay on top of their evidence and instil the need to record and complete ROE and download them onto the evidence database regularly
 - ensure their teams work the evidence in the round
 - take steps to ensure they avoid group think by reviewing and challenging their working conclusions as they go through the process.

9.5 Outputs (What is needed at the end of the activities)

- A review plan for the programme office covering the key dates of all the principle activities of the review (subject to updating the amendment as the review progresses) including:
 - The 4 “Work in Progress” sessions at week -7/-6, wk-2/-1 and day 4 of the fieldwork phase and 6-8 weeks post fieldwork
- WIP 1 should produce
 - The team's initial lines of enquiry
 - Working headlines against the model and
 - Working assessment scores
- WIP 2 should refine the initial lines of enquiry into the key lines the team is going pursue during the fieldwork phase, update the working headlines and assessment score against the model
- WIP 3 should be conclude the team's judgement on the KLOE, coverage and conclusions against the model and agree the team's assessment scores (rather than just recording the individual assessments)
- WIP 4 is an opportunity for the reviewers to:
 - Review the action plan produced by the Department and either agree it or consider next steps
 - Consider whether the Department is well placed to demonstrate actions taken against the plan at the three month stocktake

6. A date for the first review of the draft report **[DN more content on draft report TBD]**

Appendix 1 Tools and templates

All tools and templates can be found at;

K:\capability reviews\Process Dev and QA\Generic Tools and Process\How to guide\guide documentation\Tools and templates

Workstream	Tool/Template	Description/use
Relationship Management	SAMPLE RTM Induction Pack	Contains info on dept, CR process, capability model.
	SAMPLE RTM Induction Presentation	Presentation for Induction of RTMs
Fact Finding	SAMPLE Interview Briefings	Biog on interviewee and suggested questions for RTMs
	SAMPLE CR Schedule	Schedule for pre-fieldwork (fieldwork in same doc)
	SAMPLE Site Visit Briefing	Outline of operations at site, itinerary
	SAMPLE Publication Summary	Summary of publication evidence content for RTMs
	SAMPLE Central Stakeholder running order	Design of session for PMDU/RTMs
	SAMPLE Central Stakeholder outline	Agenda for all attendees
	SAMPLE Central Stakeholder ws output	Output of w/s
	SAMPLE External Stakeholder running order	Design of session for PMDU/RTMs
	SAMPLE External Stakeholder outline	Agenda for all attendees
	SAMPLE External Stakeholder ws note	Output of w/s
	SAMPLE External Stakeholder introductory slides	Scene setting slides for session
	SAMPLE Delivery Partner Stakeholder running order	Design of session for PMDU/RTMs
	SAMPLE Delivery Partner Stakeholder outline	Agenda for all attendees
	SAMPLE Delivery Partner Stakeholder ws output	Output of w/s
	SAMPLE Delivery Partner Stakeholder introductory slides	Scene setting slides for session
	SAMPLE Kick off ws outline	Agenda for all attendees
	SAMPLE Kick off ws outputs	Output of w/s
	SAMPLE what's good ws outline	Agenda for all attendees
	SAMPLE what's good ws outputs	Output of w/s
	SAMPLE KLOE ws running order	Generic KLOE Design of session for PMDU/RTMs
	SAMPLE KLOE ws outline	Generic KLOE Agenda for all attendees
	SAMPLE KLOE 1 ws outputs	Output of w/s
	SAMPLE KLOE 2 ws output	Output from KLOE w/s 2 (built on KLOE 1)
	SAMPLE playback ws presentation	Scene setting slides for session
	SAMPLE Playback ws note	Output of ws
Action Planning	060405 Performance Improvement Sources of Support	
	POV Action Planning v0.3	
Generating KLOE	SAMPLE WIP 1 outline	Design of session
	SAMPLE KLOE output from WIP 1	KLOE as arrived at in WIP 1
	SAMPLE WIP 2 running order	Design of session
	SAMPLE Interim DWP CR Review Team's Finding Record	Amalgamated RTMs' High level assessment (and scores) – output from each WIP
	SAMPLE Interim DWP CR Review Team's Finding Record (clusters)	High level assessment (and scores) by clusters – output after WIP 2
	SAMPLE Interim Assessment of Capability	Xls containing record of RTM's assessment
	GUIDANCE Agreeing and reviewing Key lines of Enquiry	Guidance doc
Fieldwork	SAMPLE CR schedule	Schedule for fieldwork (pre-fieldwork in same doc)
	SAMPLE RTM daily diary	Individual schedule for a RTM for 1 day fieldwork
Reporting and Publishing	TBC	
Quality Assurance	TBC	