

Annex A: The model of capability



The model of capability has been designed specifically for the Capability Reviews. It was developed through consultation with senior leaders in Whitehall and external experts. The model is deliberately selective and designed to focus on the most crucial areas of capability – leadership, strategy and delivery.

The reviews provide an assessment of capability for departments, identify key areas for improvement and set out key actions to address these areas.

The scope of the reviews is to assess the capability of departments’ senior leadership in the areas above, using the model of capability. The model enables judgements to be made against 10 elements across leadership, strategy and delivery, using an underlying group of 49 questions.

Each review has been carried out by the Capability Reviews Team with a team of external reviewers assembled specially for the department under review. These reviewers have been drawn from the private sector, the wider public sector and board-level members of other government departments.

The Capability Reviews Team will regularly review progress and provide support to help ensure that the department is on track to deliver.

Leadership

Key questions that test current capability

L1 Set direction

- How do you set a clear direction and articulate the vision to provide a compelling and coherent view of the future?
- How do you take difficult decisions, and do you follow them through?
- How do you generate common ownership of the vision amongst the board, the department and delivery owners?
- How do you maintain focus when faced with crises/system shocks? How do you balance this with the need to keep the vision up to date when circumstances change?

L2 Ignite passion, pace and drive

- Are you seen as role models in the department, inspiring the respect, trust, loyalty and confidence of superiors, peers and staff? Do you talk, listen and act on feedback and thereby demonstrate an understanding of the business?
- Do you display passion about meeting delivery outcomes?
- How do you engage personally with customers and staff in the department and across the system?
- How do you maintain energy and enthusiasm? How do you inspire staff to be proud to work for the organisation?

L3 Take responsibility for leading delivery and change

- Do you drive delivery by taking responsibility, welcoming challenging feedback on performance and learning lessons from successes and failures?
- How do you role-model an effective corporate culture of teamwork within the system? Do you and the senior leadership team act as an effective guiding coalition and initiate work across boundaries to achieve delivery outcomes?
- Do you accept the pressing need for change? Do you demonstrate your personal commitment to that change?
- How do you manage change effectively? How do you champion and drive through that change, addressing and overcoming resistance when it occurs?
- Are you open, honest, courageous and unflinching in delivering tough messages to your ministers and the department?

L4 Build capability

- How do you nurture talent and encourage innovation in order to build capacity?
- Do you have a leadership development/promotion process that is fair and transparent?
- How do you manage the performance of everyone by rewarding good performance and tackling poor performance?
- Do you get enthusiastically involved in identifying talent and building capability in individuals and teams?
- Do your culture, behaviour and staff profile reflect the diversity of the customers you serve?

Strategy

Key questions that test current capability

S1 Focus on outcomes

- Do you have one overarching set of clear and challenging outcomes, aims and objectives that will improve the overall quality of life for customers and benefit the nation?
- How do you work with ministers to develop strategy?
- How do you negotiate trade-offs between 'priority' policies?
- How do you work with other departments and partners external to government when developing strategy?

S2 Base choices on evidence

- How do you understand what your customers and stakeholders want?
- How do you identify future trends and plan for them? How well do you identify and manage the associated risks?
- How do you innovate by developing creative solutions to challenging problems? How do you ensure appropriate ambition?
- How do you choose between the range of options available?
- Once a strategic challenge has been identified, what process do you follow to address it, and who is involved?
- How do you ensure that your decisions are informed by sound evidence and analysis?
- How do you design systems that deliver your strategic objectives? How do you consider whole systems and understand the cost base?

S3 Build common purpose

- How do you align and enthuse the different players in the delivery chain to deliver?
- How do you remove obstacles to effective joint working? How do you share learning in order to ensure the strategy is delivered?

Delivery

Key questions that test current capability

D1 Plan, resource and prioritise

- Do you have the right skills, resources, structures and plans necessary to deliver the strategy as part of a clear model of delivery?
- Do you prioritise (and de-prioritise) and sequence deliverables, taking account of a proper risk management strategy, focused on change management priorities?
- Are your delivery plans aligned with the strategy? Are they robust and regularly reviewed?
- Are your delivery plans consistent with each other? Do they form a coherent whole that will deliver your strategy?
- How do you maintain a focus on efficiency and value for money?

D2 Develop clear roles, responsibilities and business model(s)

- Is the purpose of the departmental centre and headquarters functions clear?
- How do you ensure you have clear roles and responsibilities, rewards and incentives, which are understood across the delivery chain? Do they reflect the business model(s), and are they supported by appropriate governance arrangements?
- How well do you understand your business model(s)?
- How do you know whether you have the right balance between centralised and decentralised services?
- How do you identify and agree accountabilities and responsibilities for delivering desired outcomes across the delivery chain? How do you make sure that they are clear and well understood by all parties?
- How do you negotiate and contract with delivery agents, stakeholders and partners? How are these agreements documented and shared?

D3 Manage performance

- Do you have high-quality performance information supported by research and analytical capability? Does it allow you to track performance across the delivery chain?
- Do you actively respond to performance issues and follow them up?
- How effective is high-level programme and risk management across the delivery chain?
- How do you ensure and maintain effective control of the department's resources and the quality of its outputs?
- How do you know that your delivery chain understands customer needs and the drivers for satisfaction and responds to them?
- How do you ensure that your delivery chain captures and realises benefits?
- How do you feed this information back into the development of your strategy?

Annex B: Assessment categories



Strong – good capability for future delivery in place, in line with the capability model. Clear focus on the action and improvement required to deliver transformation over the medium term.



Well placed – well placed to address any gaps in capability for future delivery through practical actions that are planned or already underway. Is making improvements in capability and is expected to improve further in the medium term.



Development area – the department should be capable of addressing some significant weaknesses in capability for future delivery by taking remedial action. More action is required to close those gaps and deliver improvement over the medium term.



Urgent development area – significant weaknesses in capability for future delivery that require urgent action. Not well placed to address weaknesses and needs significant additional action and support to secure effective delivery. Not well placed to deliver improvement over the medium term.



Serious concerns – serious concerns about current capability. Intervention is required to address current weaknesses and secure improvement in the medium term. (NB only used infrequently, for the most serious gaps.)