Self Reviews in Community Health Councils

Facilitator's Manual

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(i) Planning a Review Day

A **Self Review** day is principally to help members and staff set priorities for the organisation for the next year, but can also be an invaluable tool to help all members review the previous year's work or address problems with the organisation's structure. The day offers everyone an equal say; brings members together and gives them ownership of the outcomes; enhances commitment by everyone in the organisation; and ends with a more firm consensus for what the organisation's purpose is.

It is important to encourage people to play an early part in the Review process - before setting an agenda for the Review Day. In order to gather information a preliminary questionnaire should be sent to all members and staff. A model questionnaire is outlined in the next section - which also provides invaluable background information during the course of the Review.

An agenda for a review day could look as follows:

1. Introduction and outline of the day

2. Review of the previous year

3. As we see ourselves now and what we would like to be.

4. Purpose statement

5. Demands

6. Resources

7. Core services

8. Aspirations

9. Priorities

10. Ways forward

The **'Review of the previous year'** session helps everyone remember, or perhaps even realise for the first time, everything the organisation has accomplished over the previous year. This can be a pat on the back but may also reveal a lack of real achievements, or a lack of knowledge by everyone of what all parts of the organisation are doing, or that the work is not prioritised or not much more than reactive. These issues and concerns can all be picked up and explored later in the day.

The next exercise is a standard facilitators session to warm up the group and to help people, in a non-threatening manner, to express their concerns about the organisation and their dreams of where it should be.

The **'Purpose statement'** session allows everyone a chance to discuss why the organisation exists. It should result in a small number of statements being prepared, which can be amalgamated afterwards into a sentence or two as an be agreed statement of purpose. It is not necessary to come up with a definitive statement on the day but it is important to have this discussion before moving on. Debate on this issue will help to clarify people's thinking and may reveal any fundamental divisions between members which need to be ironed out.

The **'Demands'** session helps everyone to discuss the likely demands to be placed on the organisation in the next year and the **'Resources'** session helps everyone to be clear about what resources are available to tackle the work of the CHC in the year ahead.

You should then be ready to discuss **'Core services'**: what are the basic services which the CHC should always provide? This builds on the purpose statement helps to form a short list of essential activities which, following the demands and resources session, should be realistic.

The **'Aspirations'** session adds an element of excitement to the proceedings - when everyone has a chance to put forward their pet project or area of concern. All of the activities which people would like the CHC to do, which fall within the purpose statement and follow on from the core services, are tabled for consideration.

These are then listed as **'Priorities'** - perhaps the hardest part of the day for participants - but absolutely essential. Again, this process is through discussion and consensus building.

The day finishes with **'Ways Forward'** - looking at what to do following the day, the need to set objectives for the priorities and build up a full set of workplans for the organisation to work to over the next year.

The above example suits an organisation without any history of setting its priorities and objectives.

The outcome should be a greater understanding by all members of the work of the organisation, a sense of teamwork and a commitment to some outlined priorities. In the CHCs like this where we have conducted a Review, members have also been pleased to have an opportunity for time out to get to know each other better. An organisation that has held a review day before may wish to look at its structure or review its previous year's activities in more detail. We have piloted elements of a review day to help with this process and these are detailed in the next section.

After the review day

The review day is only part of the process. Following the day the organisation can experience great change. CHCs have reported far greater member involvement in activities with activities both better attended because of commitment but also better planned to fit in with member availability; more prioritising and rejecting of work that cannot be tackled within existing resources; higher levels of training for members; far greater teamwork; and easier meetings with far more agreement across the CHC.

What is important is that the immediate positive outcomes from the day are not lost and are followed through. Priorities should have clear objectives set to them and detailed workplans should be drawn up to guide the work of the CHC throughout the year. The plans should be reviewed and altered regularly - so that they remain a relevant guide to the work the CHC intends conducting.

Who should conduct the Review?

For the review day to work everyone must be able to contribute equally. It is, therefore, important that the day be conducted with participative training techniques, in other words group activities where everyone can contribute rather than a speaker telling everyone their ideas and then asking for responses. Fortunately , more and more seminars and conferences use this technique now and most people will have experienced group work.

The reason for using group work in this context is that everyone has some idea of what the CHC exists for, what its basic services should be and what they would like to see it doing. What the organisation needs is to hear their views so that a dialogue can begin and some common ground established. Some input from facilitators is often required to spark off ideas or to give examples of what core services could be. Sometimes everyone can miss something obvious and a facilitator needs to pick this up. Facilitators, therefore, cannot be members or staff of the CHC because this would either exclude them from the discussion or give them too much say. Facilitators need to be familiar with the work of CHCs and could be members/staff from other CHCs - preferably not in the same Region.

What do you need to tell Facilitators?

The CHC must discuss with facilitators what their current structure is, how the CHC sets priorities currently, if at all, and what they want to see out of the day.

Outcomes

The facilitators must be explicit with the CHC about what the likely outcome will be. A day can only be the start and a CHC new to the process and moderately active at present should expect at the end of the day to find the members more clear about what the CHC exists for, more commitment to the organisation because of the opportunity for 'time out' and to get to know their colleagues, and with an outline of priorities for the coming year which could be developed into a set of firm and clear objectives for the CHC. This is a modest but more than worthwhile goal.

The long-term benefits will only come if there is a commitment to follow through these priorities, review the work of the CHC over the year and to hold another day the next year.

Administration

A review day must be held when most members of the CHC can attend. Usually this will be on a weekend. Facilities are extremely important and no attempt should be made to do the day on the cheap. The room must be comfortable with enough space for all the members to sit round in a large circle or on several tables and also to be able to split into small groups. A flipchart is required, ideally two, and copious amounts of paper. 'Blu-tack' and new marker pens should be supplied. The room itself must have plenty of wall space to hang flipchart paper on, the more the better. Ideally, coffee and tea will be on tap all day and biscuits available. Lunch should be buffet, not served so people can mix during lunch, and be provided either in the same room or nearby. The lunch should be good to excellent. It should be free to members - they deserve it for giving up their day. The lunch break must be at least 3/4 of an hour.

Without the comfort of all the above the day can be a success but it becomes more difficult. The members deserve spoiling once a year and this should be considered as one of the most important CHC events of the whole year.

ii) QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire can enable contributions from those members who will inevitably not be able to attend, sparks thoughts in the minds of prospective participants, poses unusual questions and so captures people's interests, achieves higher attendance, and provides information to be used on the day.

The questionnaire should concentrate on what will be useful for the day itself and not be used for other purposes which may or may not be realised at a later date because this devalues the questionnaire. All staff should be asked to complete the questionnaire as well as members. Questionnaires can be confidential but many people choose to put their names to them.

How the questionnaire is used is explained when appropriate elements of the day are addressed in the following sections. A model questionnaire is shown overleaf.

Community Health Council
CHC Review Day - (Date)

Preliminary Questionnaire

In order that the 'Review Day' incorporates those issues which are considered to be of importance to you as a member of the Community Health Council, it would be most helpful if you would complete the attached questionnaire and return it to the CHC office by .....

1   CHC priorities

If you had to choose 5 issues to be the most important to the CHC for the next year, what would they be and why? Please detail.

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2   CHC Values

Are there any overriding values or guiding principles that you consider should govern the whole of the CHC's work? If so please detail.

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3   General initiatives

There are many activities the CHC could be doing but is not at present.   You may have often thought of issues which the whole CHC ought to address or activities it could conduct.   Please detail what, in an ideal world, you would like the CHC to address or do. (Please restrict your list to a maximum of 5 items).

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4 Specific initiatives

There are many initiatives the CHC could be taking in specific areas or for particular care groups. You may often have thought of issues which a working party or committee ought to address or activities it could conduct. Please detail what, in an ideal world, you would like a working party or committee to do. (Please restrict your list to a maximum of 5 items).

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5 Working methods

Do you have any general views to express about current methods of working and do you have any proposals for improvement?

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iii) ELEMENTS OF A REVIEW DAY

1.   INTRODUCTION   5 minutes   Essential

It is usual on a facilitation day to spend some time on initial introductions.   It is suggested that only about 5 minutes is devoted to this activity.   Often the Chair of the CHC will want to introduce the day and facilitators.   Facilitators should ensure that everyone present quickly says who they are; that everyone knows who the facilitators are and where they come from, when coffee breaks are, when lunch is, when the day will finish, and where the toilets are.   A quick summary of what the day will entail is also helpful for those present.

These all may seem trivial and obvious but it is surprising how easy it is to forget the obvious and how disconcerting it can be to a participant not to know when coffee is or where the toilets are.

2.   REVIEW OF PREVIOUS YEAR   20-30 minutes   Essential

- unless conducting an evaluation

This exercise can be conducted as a quick brainstorm.   Ask what the CHC did in the last year and write up on the flipchart everything that is shouted out.   Useful prompts include 'did you meet?' and 'did you visit anything?', as the most obvious activities are often ignored.   If there is time it is very useful to ask what the CHC achieved over the previous year.   Achievements can be marked against the long list which has been produced.   This gives a very good feel for how active and how strategic the CHC is.   This exercise helps the members realise how much they do already and perhaps how they may need to prioritise or reconsider the way they work.

In piloting this exercise we have found members value a review of the previous year.   Invariably many members do not have the same overview that the Chief Officer and the Chair of the CHC have.   Often members only discuss the work of their particular committees or projects they are involved in and this provides an opportunity to comment on all the work of the CHC.   It is important in this session to ensure work mainly done by the staff, such as advice and complaints, is raised and acknowledged.

3.   EVALUATION OF PREVIOUS YEAR   60 minutes   Optional

If the CHC wants to spend some time evaluating the previous year's work as a facilitated exercise and if it set aims and objectives for that year's work then this exercise is appropriate.   Flipcharts should be pre-prepared with the Aims and Objectives written on each chart.   There may be full CHC aims and objectives and subsidiary working party or committee aims and objectives and if this is the case the latter can be evaluated within each working party or committee.

Take everyone through each aim and objective in turn, asking whether the broad aim and objective was met, who was involved in the activities, and who were the leaders for each.   This tends to be a somewhat laborious exercise but is important.   It comes early in the day when people are fresh.   Spend some time on this exercise and help everyone to participate.   Test whether people are satisfied that the aims and objectives were appropriate as they could have been met but with very little achieved by doing so.

This exercise has been piloted with CHCs when they have already started the process of objective setting in previous years and want to evaluate their work in more detail.   The exercise takes some time and requires skillful facilitating to maintain interest, but does build up a more detailed understanding of how successful the work of the CHC was.   This will lead to better priority setting later in the day.

## 4.   ANIMAL GAME / SHIELD EXERCISE   10-30 mins   Optional

If the participants appear to need a warming up exercise, are at a basic level of understanding about what the CHC exists for, or want to spend some time going back to basics, then a traditional organisational exercise is useful here.   Two exercises used successfully with CHCs are the 'animal game' and the 'shield/coat of arms'.

a)   The Animal Game

Split participants into small groups.   Ask them to draw an animal which represents the CHC as it is now and another for how they would like the CHC to be.   Each group to report back to the full group.

b)   The Shield
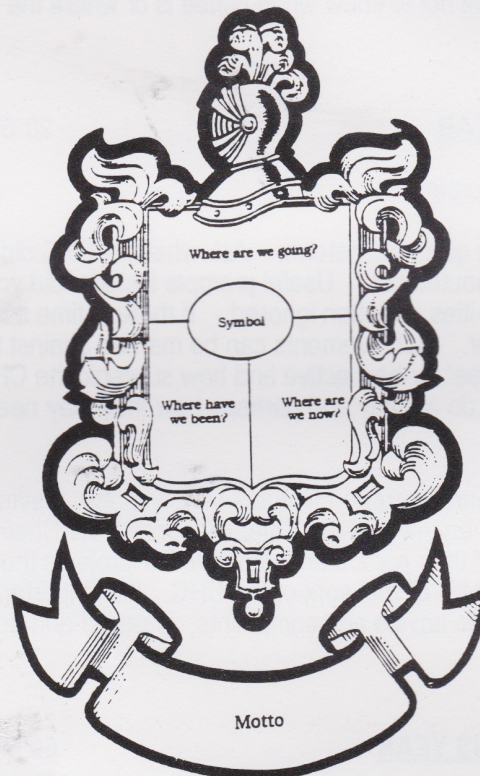
Ask the group to fill in the spaces of a shield or coat of arms as above.   One participant drew the shield as a heart which neatly escaped the military overtones of a shield.   Again ask each group to report back to everyone.

This exercise is enjoyable, but can also be quite challenging.   It reveals current discontents in a safe way because of the use of metaphor and allows people to express ideals for the organisation in an equally non-threatening or too critical fashion.

5.   PURPOSE STATEMENT   30 minutes   Essential

Even if the CHC has an existing statement of what it exists for it is worth revisiting.   It is not always possible to draw up a definitive statement on the day but it is essential to have the discussion.

Split the participants into small groups and ask each group to write a sentence or two which would summarise what the CHC exists for to a member of the public.   Each group should write these onto flipchart paper.   A full group discussion can isolate the common elements and a statement or two or three statements can be honed down for completion by the CHC following this day.

The purpose statement is an essential part of the day.   Not only is it useful to have a short statement to give to the public about why the CHC exists, it is essential that members have a clear idea and commitment to a common purpose.   Even when a statement already exists it is important to review it so that everyone remains committed to it.   The self-review process works like a series of building blocks.   To be able to address priorities we have found these earlier sessions to be essential.   Without them everyone is speaking from a different perspective.

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6. RESOURCES

<div align="right">15-30 minutes <u>Essential</u></div>

This exercise can be conducted in small groups or as a brainstorm exercise. If done in small groups report back with one item from each group in turn so every group can be fully involved. There will be duplication. Whether with everyone or in a small group the question is the same.

What resources are available to the CHC to do its work? The aim of this session is to both understand the wide extent of resources but also the limitations. Report backs should cover both staff and members and spend some time on both and what each provide. Report backs should also cover money, office and all office services, and very importantly allies such as voluntary organisations and members of the public. It is worth spending time on problematic areas. For example, if the staff feel undervalued ensure the members dwell on this aspect or if members spend little time on CHC activities concentrate on what the members can bring to the CHC and discuss involvement and time commitments at times of convenience to them.

We have found this exercise to be essential because not everyone is aware of either the limitations or the potential resources at hand to the CHC. These need to be understood if any discussion about core services and priorities is to be realistic. We have found it to be important to highlight the value of members' contributions here, the value of staff contributions, to acknowledge limitations, especially of finance, and to explore potential resources such a working with local voluntary organisations, applying for grants, co-opting members onto the CHC.

7. DEMANDS

<div align="right">15-30 minutes <u>Essential</u></div>

This is another easy exercise which can be conducted with everyone together or in small groups that report back. Again, if conducted in small groups, have each group report back on one item in turn and so on. The question to pose is what demands are to be placed on the CHC in the coming year? Try to avoid demands from issues the CHC wants to address as these will be coming up later but do try to take into account issues or projects the CHC is already committed to. Concentrate on external demands such as 'need to find new premises', 'trust status of local hospital', or 'closure of maternity unit'. Finish with a very short discussion about which demands can't be ignored.

This, again, is an essential exercise. The members may feel they need to react fully to every demand made on them and the problems caused by this need to be discussed. Other members may simply not be aware of all the demands likely to be made on the whole CHC in the next year. Again, ensure demands on staff are acknowledged such as a rising number of complaints or a large change in membership. If these demands are not explicitly acknowledged the priorities set later in the day will be unrealisable and the CHC will be setting itself up to fail or place too much workload on the members and/or staff.

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10.   **STRATEGIC INTENT**   30 minutes   <u>Optional</u>

If the CHC is very well organised and has a very strong identity then you may wish to try this exercise. Split them into groups and ask each group to come up with a statement of where the CHC should be in, say 20 years time. In other words what is the ideal service they would like to see the CHC providing summed up in a short sentence?

An example of a commercial statement of strategic intent is Coca-Cola's: 'To have a Coke within arms reach of anyone in the world'.   Use this as an example.   An example from a CHC is: 'To be known as the Citizen Advice Bureau of the local health service'.   This obviously does not cover everything a CHC exists for and would need supplementing.   The reason for having a statement of strategic intent is to have a long-term goal that everyone in the organisation can sign up for and all activities of the organisation can be geared towards.

'Strategic intent' can move CHCs towards long-term goals.   We introduced this session as an opportunity for CHC members who work extremely well together to be challenged into going one step further and for a CHC in this position it is a very exciting exercise for them to consider.   The idea of Strategic Intent comes from 'Strategic intent. G.Hamel and C.K.Prahalad. Harvard Business Review. May-June 1989 (pp 63-76).

11.   **ASPIRATIONS**   20-30 minutes   <u>Essential</u>

Pre-prepare on flipcharts a list of the general initiatives. Be careful to ensure they are all general initiatives and look under the other two headings for general initiatives as many people will duplicate their answers or place 'general initiatives' under 'specific initiatives' and vice versa. You can combine this exercise with the following one depending on the answers from the questionnaires, the current structure of the CHC, and the stage at what workplans are currently placed as there may be ongoing work.   Brainstorm the full group or split into small groups to add to the list anything in their wildest dreams they would like the CHC to do. Also add any issues which may have come up from the demand session earlier.

Small groups will accept the need to prioritise at this stage and automatically look back at the core services and after discussion cull the list down to a manageable number.   On the other hand you may be left with a huge long list.   If you have a long list go into the 'priority setting' exercise to shorten it.

12.   **SPECIFIC INITIATIVES**   30 minutes   <u>Optional</u>

Many CHCs will address specific initiatives within their committees or working parties.   You may also have included these under the exercise above. If these are to be addressed separately on the day go through the same exercise as above. At this stage all you are doing is producing a long list, they will prioritise later.

13. **PRIORITIES**   30-60 minutes   <u>Essential</u>

How this exercise is approached depends partly on the length of the list of activities.   If it is a long list it is helpful to approach the task in two parts.

a)   Ask each individual participant to place a tick against their priorities.   Restrict them to 5 votes and they are not allowed to place more than one tick against an item.

b)   Split into groups.   Ask each group to select three priorities based on, but not dictated by, the votes cast.   When they report back to the full group they must justify why they have selected these priorities.   There will be overlap between the priorities selected.

With each of the above sessions it is important that facilitators remain flexible in how the session is conducted .   Some groups will prioritise automatically and race through these exercises.   Others will produce a long list and resent the need to prioritise.   Make sure the process of prioritising is made explicit.   The 'voting' method should be explained to everyone and people should understand what the outcome will be (i.e. if they fail to choose a particular area of concern it could end up not being addressed at all in the CHC programme for next year).   It is at this stage that the effectiveness of the previous building blocks will become apparent.   Without the previous sessions people may go through this exercise but not accept its results.

14. **AIMS & OBJECTIVES**   30-60 minutes   <u>Optional</u>

Each priority had to have aims and objectives set to it.   Take one priority and work out an aim and objective with the full group.   An example is given below:

Priority   "To respond to the acute hospital NHS Trust application"

Aim and Objective

> "To consult with the local community and respond to the acute hospital trust
> application", in order that:
>
> the views of the community are expressed as effectively as possible;
> members of the CHC and people in the community enhance their understanding of the acute
> hospital services and plans;
> the CHC establishes a solid relationship with the proposed Trust Board or continuing
> DMU management;
> the CHC's standing in the community is enhanced and that the CHC improves its networking.

The 'in order that' statement is essential because while the first statement clarifies what the task is the second statement states the major and minor reasons why the task is being tackled in the first place.   It is important to bring out all the reasons for taking on a task so that achievements can be measured and evaluated subsequently.   To have opposed a trust application and then seen the trust established is not a loss if you had other reasons for respond to the consultation.   If people do not value the other aims then they may wish to place a lesser priority on this issue.

Split the remaining priorities between the groups and ask to go through the same process for each,   setting aims and objectives for each priority.   Report back to everyone and discuss.

This session is inspired by the process in Individual Performance Review and is simply translated to an organisation.   It is less essential at this stage to address aims and objectives on the day and they can be worked out by a smaller group of members and staff following the day and agreed by the whole CHC in the usual manner.   It is important to give the priorities clear aims and objectives otherwise the priorities remain vague intentions and will inevitably be lost against every day demands on the CHC.

15. **WORKPLANS** 10-15 minutes Optional

If you have time you can take the full group through an example of setting workplans to a set of aims and objectives. Workplans need to follow the following anachronism:

SMARTO. They should be more **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, with a **T**imescale and most important of all, have **O**utcomes. A workplan for the above aim and objective might be as follows:

1) Hold two public meetings at each end of the district. The first in May, the second in June. Publicise these meetings and have speakers pro and anti trust status.

2) Hold street stalls on 6 Saturdays leading up to July

3) Members to contact an average of three voluntary organisations each to discuss the pros and cons of trust status

4) Press releases to be sent out soliciting responses from the public to the CHC. 2000 public responses required from public meetings, street stalls and direct to office and members

5) Ensure the RHA sends summary documents to all voluntary organisations on the list of health interested voluntary organisations and if they will not, to do so ourselves and send a postage bill to RHA

6) Consider the trust application in working parties, taking into account public responses, draft a response by 6 June for approval at CHC meeting on 12 June.   Finalise response on 13 June and send to RHA on 14 June.   Press release response on 14 June.

It is when you reach the stage of workplans that it really becomes clear as to how much work the CHC has decided to take on. It is useful to reach this stage on the day, but not essential, as this can be worked out more accurately and realistically if a smaller group sets the workplans.

16.   WORKING METHODS - Short version   20-30 mins   Optional

This simply takes the form of a broad discussion on how the CHC currently works and allowing everyone to consider ideas for different ways of working.   Have someone such as the Chair of the CHC draw up the current formal structure ie.   the working parties and how often the CHC and working parties meeting.   Try drawing up an informal relationship chart which addresses whom relates to whom eg.   does everything go through the office or do members relate to and contact each other without reference to the staff?

We introduced this session for CHC for CHCs which were discontent with their current ways of working.   It is a very difficult session and not always successful.   It makes a big demand on the members at point in the day when they are becoming tired.   The facilitator should use every trick to suggest different ways of viewing the problem.   The outcome will probably only be a raising of the issue and a common acceptance either to keep the current structure or introduce changes.

17.   WORKING METHODS - Long version   60 minutes   Optional

Following the above exercise cross-reference the current structure against the core services which were agreed earlier.   Do this as a full group exercise with each core service in turn.   Take the first core service, write this on the left hand side of the flipchart.   In the middle of the page suggest how this core service is tackled by the current structure eg. monitoring may be tackled partly by visits which are arranged by each committee for its own core group area.   On the right hand side note how effective people feel this structure is for tackling this core service.

You may end up with three or four flipcharts with the following headings:

Core Service   Method   Effectiveness/Comments

Then split them into groups and set the following exercise for each group:

Choose a structure.   You can chose the existing structure or decide on a new structure.   Assess your chosen structure against the core services but also against the priorities chosen earlier.   Report back with:

a)   a diagram of your formal and informal structure
b)   notes of how well you think this structure would address the core services and the priorities

This session takes the previous one further and the outcome will be some positive ideas for an improved structure.   We introduced this session for CHCs wanting to address this issue as a priority of the day and it requires some time but also requires the other essential sessions from earlier in the day.

18.   CLOSING THE DAY / WAYS FORWARD   5-10 minutes   Essential

Always end the day positively summarising where the CHC has got to and what remains to be done. Thank participants for their hard work because they will have been the hardest workers of the day.

NOTES ON TERMINOLOGY

In developing elements of a 'Review and Objective Setting' day it was quickly discovered that the terms being used to describe a process were often very different or the same items would be used with different meanings. The terms below are defined as they are used in this document. Some of these items are used elsewhere and may have a different meaning in that context.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

"A short statement outlining intentions of the organisation, ie.what the organisation exists for."

DEMANDS

"Any reactive work the CHC needs to address."

RESOURCES

"Anything that can be utilised to help the CHC do its work."

CORE SERVICES

"The essential minimum of service a CHC considers it must provide."

PROACTIVE WORK

"Work which builds on the core services and that any individual members or staff want to be addressed by the CHC."

VALUES

"Principles which underpin the work of the CHC."

PRIORITIES

"Work the CHC has to or wants to address in order of importance to the CHC."

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

"Items of work the CHC will undertake as a broad intention. " An example might be: 'To monitor the provision of mental health services within the district (aim) in order to achieve improvements in the environmental conditions (objective)."

WORKPLANS

"Tasks needed to achieve the stated aims and objectives. These tasks to be specific."

EVALUATION

"An agreed assessment of how the CHC performed against its stated aims and objectives."

MONITORING

"Continuing process of assessment of the priorities, aims and objectives and workplans."

STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

"How the CHC operates."

EMPOWERMENT

"Enabling people to exercise control."

ISSUES

"A particular topic an individual wants to be addressed."