

Mature Age

Workforce Resource 2015



A framework of recommendations for the management and retention of mature talent in local government

FOCUS AREA 1.1

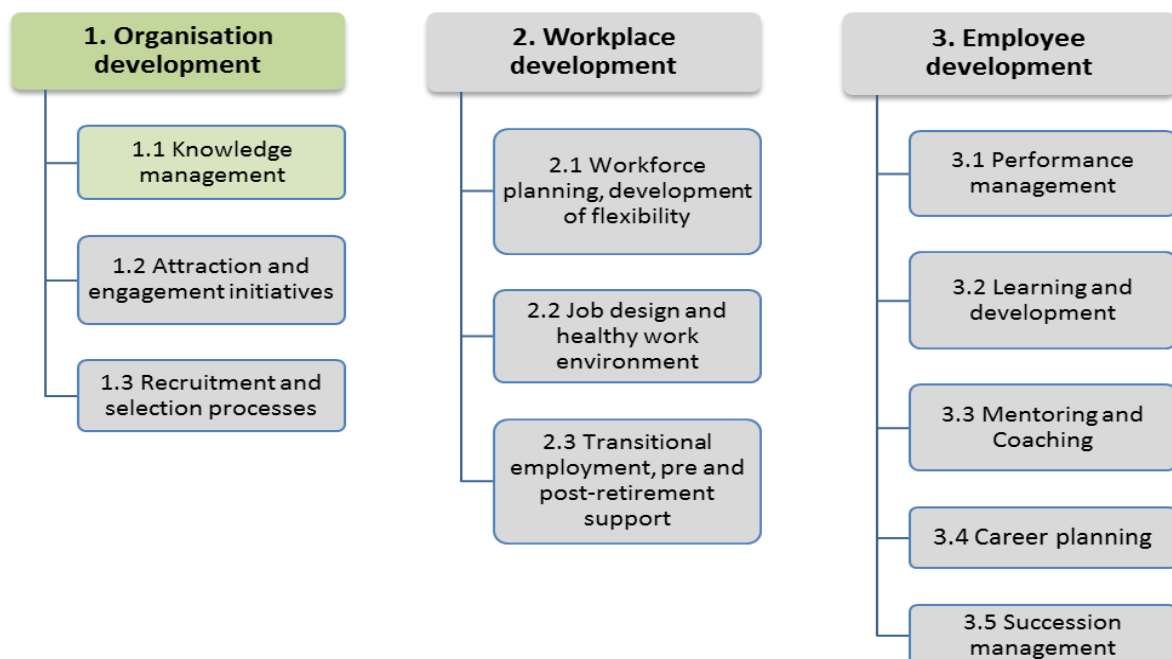
KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

The Toolkit is designed to be used by the Human Resources or Organisation Development (HR/OD) and leadership teams as they enhance their organisation's culture.

Suggested actions and strategies to help the mature age workforce may apply to the broader workforce as well and could contribute to fairer and more equitable work conditions and opportunities for all staff. Each organisation will already have in place human resource management policies and activities. It is not the intention of this toolkit to conflict with existing policies or actions. Rather, it can add value to the operations of the organisation by being used as stand-alone or integrated actions and initiatives.

Development initiatives are presented in a very broad way, with a set of actions identified as recommendations. Templates are not used in the Toolkit so that HR/OD practitioners can interpret recommendations in the most appropriate way that is aligned to existing initiatives.

There are many intended linkages and connections between the Focus Areas, which is an important factor as an aligned HR/OD strategy is developed and applied. The intention of the Toolkit is that work will be adapted and modified within each council organisation. Recommendations are not in any way intended to be prescriptive.



This Focus Area 1.1 of **Knowledge Management** deals with an emerging, critical aspect of the functioning of all organisations, particularly in retaining the knowledge and wisdom of ageing workers.

1. OVERVIEW – the need for change

Each organisation is required to gather information, communicate effectively and share with others the knowledge that is often stored solely in people's heads. This includes the extensive, and often specialised information that is kept by mature workers, who could leave the organisation without passing on their wisdom and knowledge. Transferring and formalising this information will become as important as the management of stored data and information.

A significant step in this complex process is identifying and addressing improvement strategies. If the organisation is to achieve its goal of creating an increasingly collaborative and innovative culture, the application of some of the approaches presented will become an essential aspect of business planning processes and continuous improvement.

Council organisations' content management systems (CMS) are being used with increasing effectiveness, and intranets and associated technologies enable them to access and share knowledge in ways that have never been possible before. These systems for managing stored data and information are constantly being enhanced and their scope broadened to include the tacit knowledge that has been harnessed by employees.

This Focus Area supports the use of several knowledge transfer activities that are designed to engage employees in the sharing of key corporate knowledge, skills, information and access to professional relationships developed over the course of their employment.

Council organisations increasingly operate in a changing environment and must constantly adapt and re-focus their knowledge needs, based on the understanding that knowledge and its merit, is dynamic and will reflect the strategic needs of council organisations at any point in time. Therefore, approaches to knowledge management must be planned and targeted to harness a collective corporate wisdom that has meaning and benefit to the business continuity and workforce capability of council organisations into the future. The benefits of an effective knowledge management strategy include:

- reducing the risk of corporate knowledge loss;
- ensuring the knowledge, information and on-the-job skill transfer is aligned to the business and workforce needs of council;
- providing for modernisation of the organisation's job roles and processes;
- strengthening the knowledge, skills and information base of all employees;
- developing a culture that supports the sharing of knowledge, information and on-the-job skills.

These processes can become an integral part of workplace practice in the future by creating a culture where employees are fully engaged in the process of sharing knowledge, information and on-the-job skills.

2. HOW WILL THIS FOCUS AREA HELP CULTURAL CHANGE?

This Focus Area sets out the key strategies and actions for how an organisation could manage the transfer of critical corporate knowledge, information and on-the-job skills gained by mature age employees throughout the course of their employment. This Focus Area also looks at knowledge and succession management within the operational context of the organisation to ensure future business continuity and workforce capability. *This can be applied to all staff, but in particular to mature age employees transitioning to retirement.*

The risk of corporate knowledge loss is highly pertinent to the need of the organisation to maintain high quality service delivery into the future. Therefore, to ensure that critical knowledge, information and skills are transferred as a matter of priority, the intention of this Focus Area is to provide guidance on how an organisation might address the knowledge management needs associated with:

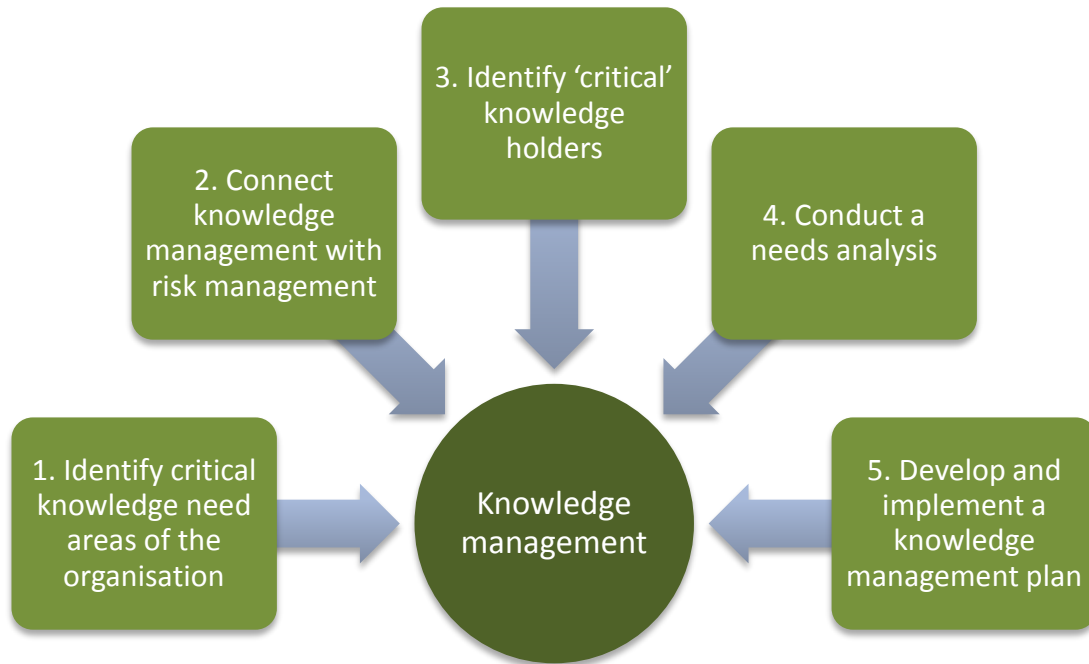
- (a) high risk core, specialised operational roles;
- (b) identification of skill and knowledge shortages;
- (c) attention to work roles undertaken by mature age employees with the increased potential for early exit due to confirmed retirement, or those who are transiting to retirement;
- (d) ensuring that the tacit knowledge held by mature age workers is harnessed and recorded within the organisation’s systems.

The application of this process focuses on operational aspects of the business and will not be extended to broader knowledge requirements in the first instance.

3. DEFINITIONS

Knowledge Management	A structured approach to identifying the needs of council and developing strategies that will facilitate and capture the knowledge, skills, information and professional relationships to enable business continuity and workforce capability
Knowledge management strategies	The range of strategies used to successfully transfer knowledge, information and skills from an individual or group of individuals to the collective corporate wisdom
Knowledge needs	Refers to the knowledge, information and on-the-job skills that are essential to council’s strategic, business and workforce capability into the future
Knowledge Needs Analysis	A process designed to identify the critical needs and issues relevant to a specified job role and/or work area

4. ACTIONS to address in this Focus Area include:



<p>1. Identify critical knowledge need areas of the organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain input on the critical strategic knowledge needs • Gain input from key staff and work areas involved in the key business processes and issues • Analyse key knowledge needs and issues identified and align manager and employee views • Develop outcomes into a priority framework for transferring these needs from the individual to the collective
<p>2. Connect knowledge management with risk management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm the critical 'at risk' knowledge areas that are essential to support future strategic and operational objectives
<p>3. Identify 'critical' knowledge holders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm the job roles, work areas and employees who have the required knowledge
<p>4. Conduct a needs analysis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm knowledge requirements and concerns of key roles and activities • Ensure the critical elements identified support council's capability needs and are the focus of the process
<p>5. Develop and implement a knowledge management plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define how this knowledge will be accessed and transferred from individuals to the collective • Implement on-going reviews and development of the process to ensure the validity and reliability of knowledge needs are met and the culture of continuous improvement into the future continues

5. WHO CAN CONTRIBUTE TO CHANGING THE CULTURE?

Leaders

- Contribute to a positive culture that supports and encourages knowledge, information and skill sharing as part of daily workplace practice;
- Ensure that staff members are aware of the current and future strategic priorities of the organisation and how these influence the knowledge priorities;
- Identify critical job roles, work areas and employees for participation in formal knowledge management processes;
- Implement effective engagement processes that enable staff to directly contribute to identifying the knowledge needs of their job role and work area;
- Implement a range of strategies to transfer knowledge from individuals to the organisation collective;
- Maintain records of changes identified and implemented as part of a continuous improvement model;
- Regularly review the future skill needs to ensure on-going validity and currency of knowledge needs against the changing strategic priorities of the organisation.

Employees

- Contribute to a positive culture of knowledge management through sharing relevant information as part of normal workplace practice;
- Contribute to the analysis of needs related to work area activities as requested;
- Contribute to identifying strategies for knowledge transfer as related to individuals;
- Participate in knowledge management strategies that support the transfer of relevant information to others within the organisation;
- Provide on-going input into review processes designed to improve work processes and knowledge transfer.

Note:

Information on issues and concerns regarding job roles and work areas obtained for the purpose of improving the knowledge management aspects of the organisation will not be used against an employee in performance appraisals or future career development opportunities.