

LEARNING HANDBOOK

Guidance and tools to support systematic learning before, during and after project activity in health and care

Action learning sets

An action learning set (ALS) is a group of people within a workplace that meet with the specific intention of solving workplace problems. The main aim of an ALS is to come away with a set of realistic actions that will help to solve or understand the issues at hand.

Tool	Time	Resources	Physicality	Interactivity
Action learning set	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★

When?

An ALS should be used throughout the life of a project as a regular opportunity to discuss issues faced by the project team.

The meetings can cover a wide range of problems being face by the project team, or can focus on a particular issue or set of similar issues.

An ALS is useful as it gives the project team protected time to discuss the issues they are facing and learn from others.

Who?

Any stakeholders can be involved – remember, this is a safe space where issues and problems will be discussed so participants must uphold honesty and confidentiality. It therefore may not be appropriate to include certain stakeholders in the process.

Everyone taking part must be committed to the ALS in the spirit of contributing challenging but constructive questions.

Some ALS's consist of colleagues from different organisations who perform similar roles. These ALS's may focus more on difficulties the individual is facing or on a project that each of the individuals is a stakeholder in.

How?

The overall time for the session required is dependent upon the group's wishes – they may wish to meet for an hour each week, or a day a month, for example.

If possible, a facilitator should be present so that everyone else can concentrate on the problems at hand rather than timekeeping and ensuring the success of each meeting.

At the first meeting, ground rules for operating should be decided – these would usually include confidentiality, honesty and safety and could also include terms of reference around attendance and the amount of time each speaker is allowed.

Those who have 'booked time' in on the agenda are then able to present the issues they are currently facing. After each presenter has explained their problem, members of the ALS encourage the presenter to learn by asking further questions, rather than answering their question with advice.

Each presenter should have an action plan once their slot has finished and should take responsibility for feeding back to the group on their progress – this is most efficient when it is feedback outside of the ALS to ensure all the allotted time focuses on problem solving.

Further reading:

- Bond - [Action learning sets information pack](#)

