Resource A;
Part 3 – Check
Debrief Template

Introduction

After an incident a de-brief should be carried out within two weeks. The After Action Review (AAR) process is a structured approach to undertaking a de-brief and constructive way of identifying lessons identifed from the incident. The AAR process detailed below has been adapted from the national process to assist with the de-briefing of business continuity related incidents.

An AAR is constructed of four questions:

1. What was expected to happen?
2. What actually occurred?
3. Why was there a difference?
4. What can be learned?

AARs are usually conducted by a facilitator, who was not involved in the incident and usually ensures that there is:

- An open discussion held
- Everyone in the room participates
- Development of learning points

Time allowance

The time required to undertake an AAR can be 15 minutes to two hours long.

Planning an AAR

Once a facilitator has been identified, they should be provided with an overview of the incident prior to the AAR.

It is important that the correct amount of time has been allocated to the AAR and that a suitable venue is available to conduct the AAR in.

Conducting an AAR

There are a number of ground rules that all participants in the AAR should be aware of and agree to, prior to the start. These include:

- Leave hierarchy at the door
- Everyone should contribute and everyone's contribution should be respected
- The purpose of the AAR is to learn
- No blame, discussing any potential mistakes made should not lead to blame
- Everyone will have a different truth to share of the same event
- Contributions should be through what people know, feel and believe
- Respect time pressures but all must be fully present - no use of mobile phones
- Make no assumptions, be open and honest

The AAR discussion

What was expected to happen?

This question is asked to the group for their discussion. The following sub questions could be utilised (if suitable) to aide group discussion:

- Was there a planned response?
- What was the planned response?
- What was your personal expectation to happen in this type of incident
- What was the expected timeline?

What actually occurred?

This question is asked to the group for their discussion. The following sub questions could be utilised (if suitable) to aide group discussion:

- Each participant should describe - what they did, saw or experienced, during the incident.
- The participants should not be discussing what was good or bad at this stage.

Was there a difference?

This question is asked to the group for their discussion. The following sub questions could be utilised (if suitable) to aide group discussion:

- Was there a difference between what was expected and what actually happened?
- What were the good points and what didn't work so well?

What can be learned or identified?

This question is asked to the group for their discussion. The following sub questions could be utilised (if suitable) to aide group discussion:

- With the benefit of hindsight - what could have been done differently/better?
- Does anything need to be changed to improve future responses?

Closing the AAR

The key learning points should be summarised from the discussion held, focussing on what lessons have been identified.

Inform participants of what are the next steps i.e. report writing. If actions have arisen in the AAR, it is the responsibility of the AAR participants to take the actions forward and ensure they are brought into the existing reporting mechanisms within their organisation.

Sharing the Report

Once the report has been completed share it with members of the AAR and ask if the group are happy to share the lessons identified.

An example of a report template is shown below.

After Action Review Report Template – Example

Name of Facilitator –

Attendees –

Apologies –

Date of AAR –

Overview of the incident:

Overview of the discussion at the AAR:

Lesson Identified –

To be actioned by (if required) –
Date for completion (if required) -

Lesson Identified –

To be actioned by (if required) –
Date for completion (if required) -

Lesson Identified –

To be actioned by (if required) –
Date for completion (if required) -