

Appendix 4

Objective Setting

Objectives and performance outcomes should be realistic and achievable but at the same time they should be challenging and serve to raise the standard of service provided. This is easier achieved when objectives are set within a unit or service. It may be more of a challenge when the objectives are set externally. Irrespective of whether objectives are generated internally or externally the identification of objectives and performance outcomes, in support of team, unit or service objectives, should follow a structured approach. This approach is represented by the anagram SMART. This approach encourages us all to consider 5 elements that will help in coming to a better understanding of what is required, when it is required and what success will look like.

The anagram SMART stands for;

- **Specific** – the individual knows exactly what to achieve
- **Measurable** – achievement can be measured in terms of quality, quantity, cost and time. The performance outcome required is described.
- **Achievable** – given the resources available – both human and financial – the possibility of meeting the objectives. Allow for raising the standards by setting some “stretch” objectives.
- **Realistic & Relevant** – it contributes to the organisational / business unit objectives or the individuals development plan
- **Time-bound, Timely** – the start and finish dates, time span or frequency are specified as appropriate

Types of Objective

Quantitative: these objectives are usually expressed in numerical terms. See 10 clients per day, reduce error rate by 5%: conduct 5% more audits

Event or time line: these objectives relate to the completion of events / activities. These objectives are often support activities necessary to achieve some other objectives, e.g. recruit 50 nurses by 1st June: publish report on the 4th of each month

Behaviours: these objectives relate to existing behaviours being strengthened, new behaviours being introduced or ceasing specific existing behaviours being ‘