Module 1
Handout: The Team Coaching process – questions for each stage

When working as a team coach, we would strongly encourage you to build your own 'bank of questions'. Still, here are some questions to ask yourself or the team, that might be helpful at any step of the way:

Preparation

How ready is this team for coaching?

- Do the team members have positive experience and expectations of coaching?
- Does the team see team coaching as both urgent and important?
- Does the team have an appropriate mix of complementary skills, relevant to its expected outcomes?
- Are the team members genuinely committed to becoming a high performing team?
- Are the team members – including the leader -- committed to open and honest dialogue?
- Are they – including the leader – willing to challenge themselves and each other?
- Are the team leader's motivations for introducing team coaching transparent and accepted by the team members?
- Is it clear who is in the team and why?
- Is team membership likely to change during the period of the team coaching?
- Is the team willing to address and review its purpose and priorities?
- Do team members genuinely want to collaborate rather than work in silos?
- Does the team meet at least monthly?
- Do team members accept responsibility for their own and their colleagues' learning and development?
- Is the team adequately resourced (in terms of money, time, information, etc) to achieve its goals?
- Is the team prepared to invest time into coaching sessions and into implementing necessary changes?
- Is the team willing to address internal conflict?
- Is the team prepared to address poor performance by individual members?

- Is the team manager prepared to undertake personal change, to better support team performance?
- Is team coaching supported by key stakeholders outside the team?
- Are there any other significant barriers to making team coaching work?

What does performance mean for this team?

Consider the following questions, but also "what evidence do we have to answer this?"

- Do we know who our customers are? (Internal and external)
- Do we know what they want and need from us? (And do they know?)
- What's the quality of what we deliver? (Is it what they want/ need?)
- What reputation/ brand do we have with them?
- What do we do now that reinforces or undermines our reputation/ the quality of our work?
- Do we know specifically what needs to improve and how?
- Do we know what we are going to do to deliver those improvements?
    - Resources
    - Skills + competencies
    - Processes
    - Communication
    - Behaviours
- How will we know if we've succeeded or failed?
- Do we understand the difference between efficiency and effectiveness? (What are we doing efficiently that is hindering our performance?)
- Are we clear about which influences on our performance are within our control / influence; and which are not? How can we move the latter, so we can influence them?
- What have we not considered that might affect our performance next year?

Scoping and contracting

- What conversation would best help you to understand the leader's intentions, motivations and fears?
- What commitments might you require from the leader and what might they need from you?

- What conversation would best help you to understand each team member's intentions, motivations and fears?
- What commitments might you require from each team member, and what might they need from you?
- What conversation would best help the team contract together about how to make team coaching work for them?
- What contract might they, as a team, need from you?

Process skills development

Preparation for the session:
How prepared the team is for this team coaching session?

How ready you (team members) are to:

- Be open to others?
- Be open to yourself?
- Be curious?
- Be inventive?
- Be challenged?
- Challenge others?
- Challenge yourself?

Quality of listening and presence:

- How aware is the speaker of what is happening within them and around them?
- What would help them improve the quality of their thinking and feeling?
- What do I need to avoid in order not to interrupt their growing awareness?
- What will help me achieve stillness without turning to my own thoughts?
- Am I attending with all my senses?
- What exactly is the issue here?
- What do we all know about this?
- What do only some of us know about this?

Coaching conversations

- Contracting for the session: what responsibilities do we have to each other?

- Overarching goal: How does this issue fit with our team mission or purpose?
- Define the issue. Why is it important now?
- Context: Do we understand the system(s)?
- Redefinition: How has our understanding of the issue changed?
- Seeking individual and collective mind-shift: What do we need to let go of and what to embrace?
- Alternative ways forward: What [additional] options do we have?
- Decisions: What have we decided, including deciding not to decide?
- Re-contracting: What has changed in our understanding of how we need to work together on this issue? How will we keep on top of this issue in the future?

Process review

- What has changed in the way I am present in the session?
- What has changed in the way I am listening to my colleagues?
- What has changed in the way I am presenting my point of view?
- Is there any improvement in the sense of openness and trust?
- Is there any improvement in the inclusiveness of all team members?
- Is there an effective summary at the end of the session?

Process transfer

- How will you prepare the team to take over responsibility for the coaching process?
- How will you know that this is happening?
- What can you do if the team is slow to own the process?

Outcomes review

- Does the team have greater understanding of its internal and external context/dynamics, insofar as it affects performance?
- Does it have greater clarity of what it wants/needs to do as a result?
- What actions have they taken? What are they doing differently?
- What impacts can they define and attribute to those changes?
- Can these impacts be assessed from multiple perspectives?