FAQs on high performance work in self-organising teams

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# Introduction

These answers to Frequently Asked Questions have been developed in response to questions NDS receives from disability providers. Several have been raised and discussed at forums and workshops, or have emerged in work NDS staff are undertaking one-to-one with disability providers.

They will be added to, adapted and modified as we learn more from the sector’s experience in the future. We welcome your feedback (please see contact details on last page).

# Change process

## Where do you start? What’s the first thing to do?

We advise for organisations moving towards a high performance organisation with self-organising teams to do this in four stages:

1. Consider and consult
2. Design and develop
3. Test and trial, and
4. Scale-up and sustain.

So, the first stage starts with exploring this new way of working. Most organisations begin the process just by looking at examples of international or Australian organisations already using the model. You might do this with the assistance of a guest speaker from NDS or from an Australian organisation using the model, or by sharing information about international organisations working in the new way. Of the international organisations, [Buurtzorg Nederland](http://www.buurtzorg.com) is the best-known example, due its remarkable achievements and its longevity.

## How committed do your board of directors need to be to the change?

It is highly desirable for the board of directors to support the change, or at least the *piloting* of the new approach. If the board has reservations about the approach, conducting a pilot with pre- and post-implementation evaluation measures will often convince directors of the benefit of the change (see our discussion of Measurement).

## What do you do about staff members who are resisting or even disrupting the change?

Most organisations will have employees or managers who initially do not support the change. Organisations moving to the new model should consult with staff about the proposed new way of working and the potential benefits and potential disadvantages. The overall vision and aims need to be very clear at this stage – as in the change process slogan, ‘Start with the why’. As with any organisational change, some employees will enthusiastically embrace the proposed change and some employees will take time to adjust to the concept and its implementation. However, when people start to work in the new way, without unnecessary managerial supervision and with simpler organisational processes, many employees who might have been reticent about the change become enthusiastic supporters. Employees or managers who genuinely prefer to work in a traditional hierarchy usually choose to move on.

# Communication

## How do we communicate the benefits of the high performance team model to a risk averse organisation?

Reviewing case studies of high performance teams is the easiest way to discuss the benefits as they show how it works and how risks are managed. Buurtzorg, as mentioned before, is one of the best-known and most extensively documented case study, but it also raises questions for those who need more convincing e.g. applicability in Australia, nurses versus disability support workers, start-up vs changing an existing organisation etc. With the growing number of Australian disability service providers making the change to high performance team structures, we are following and documenting local case studies so we can share them with the sector. Contact us for more details (see contact details at the end of this FAQ).

In discussing case studies it is good to realise that self-organising team models do not so much require a high risk appetite, but a different approach to risk management. Organisations working with self-organising teams do not aim to minimise the risk that things will go wrong, but to increase the chance that things will go right. By enabling their teams to make their own decisions and organise their own work they build the capacity and capability of staff to make the right decisions themselves in line with the organisation’s purpose and values instead of relying on what they are being told to do. By not prescribing how people do their job, self-organising teams are encouraged to learn how to assess situations and the risks involved and use the combined knowledge, expertise and experience of the team in decision making. This combined team knowledge base is in general much richer than that of the individual team leader or manager that in traditional structures is left to assess risks and make decisions.

The shared accountability in a self-organising team for team performance also means that potential risks and poor performance are often picked up and dealt with sooner as all team members have this responsibility, not just the team leader or manager. All staff having responsibility for recognising and responding to risks tends to be a very strong safeguard and to cultivate a desire to learn and improve practice.

## How can we ensure we engage and not just inform key stakeholders including staff and the people we support and their families in the change?

The engagement strategy should reflect the different ways people prefer to be involved in these kinds of processes. There is no one best way and offering multiple opportunities and ways for people to be engaged increases the change that they will. We have seen some great examples of strong engagement strategies in the organisations we support with their transition to high performance teams. Please contact us for more details (see contact details at the end of this FAQ).

In designing your engagement strategy it is important to keep in mind that one of the key principles behind high performance team models is to place decision making for service delivery close to participants and their families with the frontline to enable flexible, responsive individualised service delivery. This requires frontline workers and participants and families to not only be informed about the change, but be the key drivers and informers of it. Their insights in what enables them and the barriers to tailor and co-design supports are crucial in developing the high performance team model best fit for your organisation. When these insights drive the change, commitment and ownership for the new model will be strong.

## How do you encourage trust in the organisation, if you sometimes also need to shut down particular services or locations?

NDIS, with its maximum price setting, is forcing many organisations to reconsider their service offering and in some cases organisations are closing service or locations. In these circumstances, how do organisations engender trust on the part of frontline staff and people supported, when jobs may be changing or disappearing, and services in particular areas reduced? The best way of promoting trust is to be transparent about the circumstances confronting the organisation, and to share that information with frontline staff and customers. Be honest and provide clear options even if they are unfavourable.

# Designing and developing self-organising teams

## How do you land or settle upon the strategic 'why'?

The strategic ‘why’ of the change to high performing teams should come from the purpose and values of the organisation. For example, Avivo had embraced the concept of citizenship long before they made the change to high performing teams. It was already a key goal the organisation pursued for their participants. With this change, the concept of citizenship was extended to staff,

Many organisations in the disability sector have a vision, mission, purpose and values that align strongly to the key principles of high performing teams. The organisation’s vision, mission, purpose and values should not only guide how they deliver services to the people they support, but also to how they engage their workforce.

## How do you recruit for a high performance team?

At the start of an organisation’s transformation to a high performance team model we recommend organisations to first test and trial their ideas with a small number of teams. How these teams are chosen differs from situation to situation. Sometimes a new team is set up e.g. a team in a new service area, others let teams self-nominate as a test team, or choose teams that are already very strong and independent. Most organisations prefer that participation in the trial is on a voluntary basis.

In an existing self-organising team, recruitment can be done by the team with varying levels of support from the organisation. Allowing the team to choose their own team members increases the team’s commitment to do everything they can to make the new hire a successful member of their team. Self-organising teams tend to be very aware of their own culture and what it takes to be successful in their team. They also have to be able to trust and rely on each other. Introducing a new member to the team without their involvement can upset this balance.

## How do you develop teams when people are working remotely? How local is local for 'local teams'?

How you develop self-organising local teams depends on the type of team you want to develop. Different forms of local teams can be e.g. a local team delivering supports within a community, or a team around one person with high support needs.

In *a team* *focused on a person with high support needs*, it is important to develop these teams together with the service user and their family or carers. They need to be involve in the recruitment/staffing choices and the develop team practice at the start of the engagement.

In developing *a local team*, community the determination of the area they provide services to is important. The following should be taken into consideration:

* Local knowledge – is the area a meaningful one in terms of staff being able to share knowledge about community facilities, activities and dynamics?
* Team cohesion – can the team utilise a common meeting place or shared home base and do they have the tools and systems to easily connect with each other and with head office?
* Practicalities – for example, reasonable travel distances and time, in the context of NDIS pricing.

These teams can either be existing teams that are supported to work more autonomously or teams specifically set up as a self-organising team. However they are formed, they need to be supported to develop as a team with a strong shared purpose and agreed team practice. Some dedicated work with a coach at the start of their journey as a self-organising team can support them to develop this. This coach can then stay connected to the team as a resource when the team needs support in the future.

Several organisations have decided to set up self-organising teams in more remote regions as remoteness makes traditional management more difficult. A self-organising remote local or individual support team is better able to use their knowledge of the community to design the best possible supports for their participants to live as independently as possible in their community. Attracting new business is often a goal of remote teams, to ensure a critical mass of customers.

## What happens to middle management roles? What’s the value of having a team leader versus not?

This varies, but in general middle management roles change in their focus from checking and directing how frontline workers deliver services to coaching and enabling people at the frontline to work more autonomously.

In some cases this means that the middle management roles change or are replaced by a smaller number of coaching roles. Other organisations continue to work with middle management roles like team leaders but redirect their focus on supporting the team to self-organise their work.

What happens to middle management roles should depend on what teams need to enable them to self-organise their work. Already strongly independent teams could very well flourish without a team leader, whereas other teams might need the support from a team leader until they have developed their team purpose, values, practice and their independence or require a permanent team leader to facilitate the team’s processes.

## What happens to middle management responsibilities?

Depending on the level of responsibilities the team takes on, a self-organising team can pick up responsibilities for tasks which are traditionally the responsibility of middle managers such as timesheets, compliance, and rostering. Some teams pick up all these tasks. This is facilitated by:

* radically simplifying administrative policies and procedures
* having administrative systems that are convenient, easy to use, and digitally accessible across mobile platforms.

Some of these responsibilities become allocated tasks within the team e.g. rostering and checking timesheets. These tasks are divided between team members and as seen within Buurtzorg it can be a good idea to rotate the allocation of these tasks to allow everyone to learn how to do them. This however requires the team to have the necessary access to systems and tools to perform these tasks.

Other responsibilities become a part of each team member’s role e.g. making sure that information is provided for the correct billing of services, compliance with regulations and policy, and quality management. Team members are not only responsible for their individual performance in these areas, but also for the team performance. This means that staff needs to be alert to possible breaches or under performance and are responsible for acting on them in a constructive way by discussing these with the team member(s) involved and providing advice and support to improve practice.

(Note: We have followed the suggestion of [Vermeer and Wenting](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/9035249062/ref=oh_aui_detailpage_o01_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1) to use the term team ‘tasks’ rather than team ‘roles’, as the word ‘role’ can be interpreted to have a special status in the team.)

# Leadership, coaching and team support

## Is there still some form of leadership in self-directed teams?

Employee self-organisation is best thought of as a guiding principle, with the degree of external leadership versus self-management varying in practice.

In well-established Dutch models, staff take a lot of responsibility for organising the team's work, and rotate the allocation of team tasks within the group. In some cases a team coordinator or team leader role is retained. But staff in organisations at the beginning of their journey may start out by taking on just a few new responsibilities, and deferring to coordinators or managers for many decisions. It’s a good idea to identify tasks within a team early, (such as the person who monitors billed hours against people's plans, the person who develops rosters, the person who convenes team meetings) because otherwise the emergence of informal leaders can cause resentment.

In all cases, the teams need clear frameworks or as one organisation terms it, ‘guard-rails’ around their practice. These create boundaries within which they carry out their duties and self-manage and could cover team processes - such as team operation or decision-making – as well as work issues, such as quality assurance.

## What are some good examples of leadership at team level?

It’s best when team members collectively agree on the tasks and responsibilities needed, and volunteer for those they are attracted to. Over time, it’s great if everyone in a team has experience of each task; this way all team members come to understand the complexities of that task. But initially, people often gravitate to the team tasks they feel most comfortable with. Coaches who offer good leadership are those who model enabling behaviour; that is, they help the team problem-solve rather than giving direction. And senior managers who demonstrate good leadership are those who are genuinely prepared to let go of their traditional executive function, and back staff to use their own and their team's judgement within the parameters set by the organisation.

## When things are 'going to hell' how do you resist the temptation to pull the reins tighter?

This is a challenge for many senior managers. However, there are many alternative strategies and most managers understand that pulling the reins tighter because of a problem or mistake will make staff sceptical about their commitment to empowering teams and team members, and fearful of taking on responsibility in the future. [Corporate Rebels](https://corporate-rebels.com/guest-blog-paradigm-shift/), a group which has studied workplaces around the world, says that we need to move from parent-child to adult-adult work relationships. When mistakes occur, the key thing is to learn from them and work out how to prevent them in the future. Acting like an 'angry parent' doesn't encourage constructive solutions.

Senior managers might ask - 'if I react by tightening the reins, what will be effects down the track?' As one Senior Manager told us, 'I would intervene if someone is going to get hurt - otherwise not'.

## How do you manage staff expectations, for example, reframing more responsibility as resulting in greater job satisfaction?

Many workers, especially experienced ones, say that the organisation's rules and procedures can get in the way of providing person-centred support. So often workers can see that their job satisfaction will be higher if they have more control of their work, and don't need too much encouragement to embrace this.

## How do you build up confidence and shift culture without micro-managing?

The best way to do this at the organisational level is to focus on *Culture, Strategy and Structure* simultaneously. Often organisations spend more time on structure, planning how team leader and manager roles will change or how teams will be organised. But if an organisation wants staff to work in a fully person-centred way, and to build up the independence and capability of service users (consistent with the NDIS) they need to spend lots of time on cultural change and strategy. What will the change look and feel like in practice? What will be the stages? Do people understand the rationale and logic? Has every aspect of the organisation been aligned to the desired culture (e.g. policies, procedures, staff induction, training, remuneration and rewards)? Also, managers need to lead by example, which means asking and not telling. What works well is where volunteers are recruited to the change, and people have genuine choices - perhaps not about the overall direction, but about when and how they want to get on board.

## What behaviours should coaches demonstrate?

For individual coaches, building up team self-confidence is crucial. Good coaches:

* are guides and enablers, not drivers or doers
* are good listeners and speak only if they can add value, and their words will have an impact
* help people reflect honestly and learn: they can name problems if the team is hiding from them
* help the team agree on KPIs – if these are wanted or required - but accept there are many roads to achieving them
* don’t sacrifice process for outcomes: the way the team makes decisions is as important as getting the ‘right’ decisions
* enable individual and team development so that eventually people feel that they are doing it on their own.

## As a team coach, how much training will I be expected to deliver to other team members? How will I be trained to deliver this? Will I need clinical skills? Who will support me?

We think it’s important not to expect the impossible from coaches.

The job is to assist staff to work as well as possible in their teams. That may mean imparting technical skills, such as those associated with the team's core responsibilities. A coach could, for example, enable a group home team to agree on the tasks needed on a daily or weekly basis for the smooth running of the home. Helen Sanderson’s [Wellbeing Teams](http://helensanderson.net/2016/10/eight-ways-wellbeing-teams-work/) have found it useful to have both a team coach and a technical coach to support staff who are new to social care.

But most coaches find the key focus is usually team dynamics and culture. This could involve supporting the team to agree on or negotiate priorities, make decisions, and develop protocols, such as a team charter or agreement about working together. Good coaches often complement the knowledge or skills of the team, and may be able to access outside expertise or skills from an earlier career to bring to the team. Coaches should be able to request the training they need, which can then be passed on to the teams they support. Training when needed (‘just in time’ training) is probably as important as training upfront.

## How can we support managers/supervisors to ‘let go’ and move to a coaching style?

To 'let go', managers need to have a healthy amount of self-understanding and the ability to really listen to staff. Planning or road-mapping the change (without over-planning it) and working out how to radically simplify policies and procedures can help, because it makes it clear to senior managers which decisions they have to let go of. For example, a new policy might be that a staff team can seek out and roster a replacement staff member if someone is sick and they can't cover the vacancy. This makes it very clear that it’s not the manager’s job to back fill staff and allows discussion to occur away from the urgency of a real life situation.

Managers, leaders and funders need to ‘let go’ and transfer ownership to the team and team members. This means they shift their focus from management and control to supporting frontline workers taking on responsibility and being better at it every time. This develops the worker’s ‘internal compass’.

Barriers to doing this are often manager/supervisor’s approach and view of their role:

| **Traditional management and supervisory behaviours** | **Coach** |
| --- | --- |
| Wanting to help | Allowing the team or team member to grow and develop |
| Thinking you know better or can do it quicker | Allowing the team or team member own the solution and grow |
| Feeling you are adding value | Doing nothing and letting the team or team member discover their potential |
| Taking responsibility | Trusting the team or team member and allowing them to feel responsible |

## We place a lot of trust in our employees which sometimes results in complacency. How do we avoid this?

Self-managing teams should help overcome this because making staff more responsible and accountable for quality of service and quality improvement activates them to continuously think about what they are doing, why they are doing it and how they can improve. It allows everyone to share views and learn from each other about the people they are supporting. Staff can experiment, test things out and then check back with each other, and celebrate successes when things go well. Typically staff are keen to learn more about how to support people well; the needs and wishes of the people they support are leading in this, but bringing allied health professionals and other experts into the team on a regular basis to discuss strategies may also help everyone be more ambitious.

## How do you help frontline workers move to self-organising quickly and on a low budget?

Ask staff:

* What they need the organisation to do to allow them to support people better?
* What decisions and actions would staff like to make, and think they could make?
* What information and support do they need to take those actions and make those decisions?
* What procedural rules are time-wasters and could be simplified or cancelled?

Time has to be available for staff meetings and team discussions, and this may be difficult under the NDIS. The organisation will need to use some reserves for the transition but eventually savings should make this possible within NDIS pricing.

## What are the biggest risks in reducing the back-end and support services? In those teams which self-roster, how does the team manage costs and stay within the funding package?

There are two main risks. First, there is the financial risk of cost overruns, such as people providing support beyond what is funded in someone’s plan. Organisations with self-directing teams such as Buurtzorg use IT platforms to make this work. They give staff full access to the information they need to make decisions responsibly, and set up the system so that a team can see if it exceeds budgeted hours for their clients. Of course a central office staff member also needs to monitor this for the organisation as a whole and work with teams that regularly exceed budget. Other rules can be built into IT systems, for example, award restrictions can be built into rostering systems. But it does require workers, service users and families to understand and take more responsibility for the resource implications of the services they provide or access.

Second, there are risks to employees and service quality if management support is suddenly withdrawn and staff feel abandoned, aimless and even paralysed. See comments about Strategy above.

## Are there cost savings: how do organisations afford the cost of team processes?

The costs of working as a team include the costs of team meetings (which many organisations find take 1.5 to 2 hours a fortnight) and the costs associated with team members completing tasks for the team. The potential savings are in management and supervisory roles and back office roles which might not be needed to the same extent. To give an example of client-facing activity, Buurtzorg aims for 65 per cent of team members’ time being spent in client-facing activity.

# Risk and compliance

## How do you meet your risk management, duty of care and governance responsibilities and still simplify management and administration?

Risk management, duty of care and governance are still required, but are achieved more through socialisation (people learning ‘that’s the way we do things here’) than documentation.

In traditional command-and-control cultures, there are often lots of policies and procedures, giving boards of directors and management an illusion of control. However, implementation of those policies and procedures is sometimes difficult because of their sheer volume, perceptions that the policies add little value and/or lack of ownership by frontline workers.

In purpose-driven organisations, the organisation’s mission and values drive organisational activity and become part of the day-to-day experience of customers and workers. There are still policies and procedures but they are usually shorter and more relevant. Policies and procedures should always link back to the organisation’s purposes and values, as values always provide guidance. Policies might allow for flexibility, by providing boundaries rather than step-by-step guides. Where a written document is required, the document should be user-friendly. See Alan Hough’s posts on this subject on LinkedIn: ‘[Can we – should we – do ‘quality’ differently in disability services?](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/can-we-should-do-quality-differently-disability-services-alan-hough/)’ and ‘[How might we do quality differently in disability services?](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/should-we-do-quality-differently-disability-services-how-alan-hough/)’.

## In Australia, awards and enterprise agreements limit flexibility in deploying staff. How can the need to comply with awards and agreements be balanced with the need to be flexible?

This question was asked in response to a presentation on how Buurtzorg Netherlands works. A feature of the Buurtzorg Netherlands’ way of working is that team members are flexible in their rostering to ensure that the needs of customers are met. This is not to say that the needs of the individual worker are not met: the team as a whole takes responsibility for meeting the needs of the customers and those of team members.

In Australia, industrial awards and agreements are still observed in purpose-driven organisations which use self-organising teams. As teams are usually responsible for the roster when working in a self-organising way, the team as a whole takes responsibility for ensuring that the needs of customers are met while also ensuring that requirements of awards and agreements are observed. Some organisations are introducing process controls in their rostering software to ensure that employees do not work overtime except as a last resort; others are willing to leave control to the teams.

In relation to award classification levels and self-organising teams, NDS commissioned advice from Jobs Australia, which can be found on the NDS Workforce Hub (Optimising your workforce > Innovation for high performance page)

## How do you balance compliance with regulations with participant-directed supports and participant choice and control? For example, participants might not want case notes written-up; however, providers are obliged by NDIS to report based on case notes.

This challenge applies to both traditional hierarchical organisations and purpose-driven organisations. This topic might be discussed with customers at the time of negotiating the service agreement. In traditional organisations, note-taking is often perceived as a compliance activity rather than as a process with a clear purpose. Purpose-driven organisations will consider how data collection is simplified and made more useful from both a customer and staff perspective. It would be consistent with person-centred practice to involve customers in the note-taking process.

## How do you manage participants’ understanding that their home is also a workplace for staff?

Again, this issue arises in both traditional hierarchical organisations and in purpose-driven organisations. This topic might be discussed with customers at the time of negotiating the service agreement. Of course, the purpose of supporting customers in their home is to enable them to enjoy their time being home, not to make their home feel like a workplace.

## How do casual workers fit into self-organised teams?

As a matter of logic, self-organised teams will work best with employees who have an ongoing commitment to the team and teamwork. In most cases, team members are mainly permanent employees and organisations have found it difficult to engage casuals into their models. However, there is no necessary reason why casual employees cannot be part of a self-organised team.

Casual employees are usually needed to meet periods of peak demand, and it is ideal if those who work regularly with the team are integrated into team meetings and decision-making. Organisations moving to self-organising work have found that they need to reconsider their use of casual staff, including:

* the degree of reliance the organisation has on casuals
* policies in relation to back-filling – for example, letting a team identify and recruit the casual workers most aligned to their work from a pool rather than allocation occurring centrally, and
* paid time for casuals to attend team meetings.

# Measurement

## How do you measure success under this model? What KPIs can be used?

Some organisations have found it useful to develop a ‘program logic’ model. A program logic model states the assumptions underlying a reform, the processes implemented, the proposed outputs and the proposed outcomes, and can be used to generate pre-implementation and post-implementation measures. An example of a program logic model can be found in the ‘[Evaluation of the NDS Innovation for High Performance Project 2016](https://www.nds.org.au/workforce-hub/optimising-your-workforce)’ report at page 19. Evaluation techniques are discussed at pages 34 to 39 of the report.

## What aspects of performance might be measured?

If organisations want to measure performance, measures should be considered in relation to:

* the people the organisation supports
* staff, and
* the organisation, including financial and non-financial measures.

These might reflect the organisation’s strategy or any ‘program logic’ model (discussed above), and thus will vary between organisations. Samples measures can be found in the ‘['Evaluation of NDS Innovation for High Performance Project’](https://www.nds.org.au/images/workforce/workforce-project/Evaluation_of_the_IHP_Project_final_ARTD_report-v5.pdf) report at page 39.

It is worth considering what data already exists or is collected regularly in order to minimise the time and energy in collecting additional data.

## What are the IHP-10 questions?

The IHP-10, or Innovation for High Performance-10, are 10 questions that can be used to survey staff. These survey items help measure the extent to which an organisation is creating a culture of innovation for high performance. Responses to these items have been demonstrated to be strongly predictive of staff stress using a validated stress scale, as well as employee thoughts about leaving the organisation. The IHP-10 can be used for benchmarking and ongoing monitoring and evaluation, and is free of charge. You can read more about the IHP in ‘[Evaluation of NDS Innovation for High Performance Project’](https://www.nds.org.au/images/workforce/workforce-project/Evaluation_of_the_IHP_Project_final_ARTD_report-v5.pdf) at pages 21 and 22.

## How might you engage workers in measuring performance?

The best means of collecting data should be determined having regard to the type of data wanted and considerations of reliability, consistency in its collection and the cost of collection.

At least two forms of staff involvement in measuring performance are appropriate. First, most organisations choose to understand staff satisfaction and experience. Second, there are issues beyond what data are collected and go to how data are shared with the teams. Self-organising teams usually want data on their customers, their team and overall organisational performance, and want to learn what works and what doesn’t. Organisations can discuss with the teams what information they need to deliver and improve the quality of supports they deliver and what is reasonable and practical for the team in keeping the organisation up to date on its performance.

# Technology

## Which technologies make it easier to operate in new environment?

As Buurtzorg is the best known example of purpose-driven organisations internationally, many organisations are interested in what software it uses. Buurtzorg uses the [Ecare](file:///C:\Users\Yumi.Stamet\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\ZIV5DDUX\ecare.nl) system. Ecare has been [reported](http://www.springer.com/kr/book/9783319117249) to be a key element in Buurtzorg’s success. It appears intuitive to use, is fully mobile, and enables all team members to access data about the customers they are supporting. However, it is not available in Australia at this time.

Australian disability-service organisations implementing the purpose-driven approach are experimenting with a variety of applications. For example, ACES Inc. uses [Geocare](http://geoop.com/2016/10/geo-launches-mobile-job-management-software-support-people-disabilities-service-providers/) software, and has experimented with closed Facebook pages to support their customer-centric teams. Another organisation is using the [Asana](http://www.asana.com) app to assist the team member and the team as a whole in managing workflows. In general industry, many organisations are using apps such as WhatsApp, [Loomio](http://www.loomio.org) or [Slack](https://slack.com/) to enable collaboration.

As always, the selection of software should be based on a careful needs analysis of the unique circumstances each organisation faces, and include consideration of information security and privacy issues. At this time and for the foreseeable future, NDS does not endorse any particular software for self-organising teams.

# The Dutch environment

## What was the context that fostered the development of high performance team models in the Netherlands and how does this compare to the Australian context?

The Netherlands was an early proponent of personalised budgets in social care. But policy and funding changes put social care providers under pressure. These pressures included market forces, personalised budgets, decentralisation of funding and successive funding cuts.

Many looked to mergers to increase their market share and to achieve economies of scale. Some remained not-for-profits while others commercialised, but in general mergers created a market dominated by large organisations. With many of these mergers mainly driven by the desire to cut costs, the focus of many of the large organisations was on financial viability and efficiency. Many organisations took a very top-down approach to service delivery, where staff was directed how and where to work by planning and finance departments.

The lack of focus on quality and deskilling of the workforce was the reason for some organisations and entrepreneurs to seek a new way of working based on tailoring service to client needs by a frontline that was valued for their skill, knowledge and professionalism. In recognising the in-depth knowledge and expertise of their frontline, these organisations provide more person-centred and empowering services. [Monsen and de Blok](http://journals.lww.com/ajnonline/Abstract/2013/08000/Buurtzorg_Nederland.27.aspx) note that ‘I’ve been given back my profession’ is an enthusiastic comment often heard among Buurtzorg staff transferring from traditional providers.

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## Contact details

For more information please contact Caroline Alcorso on [caroline.alcorso@nds.org.au](mailto:caroline.alcorso@nds.org.au) or 02 9256 3180.

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