

After Action Review (AAR)

What is it?

An **AAR** is a simple process used by individuals and teams to capture the lessons learnt from their experiences with the goal of improving their future performance.

When to use it?

Use **AAR** at the end of a task or project to embody continuous learning and improvement as 'the way we work'. It enables you to identify and mitigate future project risks.

AARs can be run during and / or after any task or project either at key milestones or at completion.

***TIP:** It is important to run your AARs whilst the team is still available and whilst memories are fresh.*

How to use it?

It is a structured review or debrief of an activity, task, or project, which can be done in as little as 5 minutes to debrief halfway through an event, or can take up to half a day to debrief a complex project. An AAR consists of four simple questions:



As a guide, spend 25% of the time allowed on the first two questions, spend a further 25% on the third question and then spend 50% of your time on the final question.

This process should strengthen the team, not divide it so, if at all possible, get support from a facilitator to:

- ensure everyone participates including the quieter members of the group
- keep to the allocated time
- define ground rules (openness, equality, confidentiality, focus on continuous improvement)
- reinforce the positive elements
- identify what could have been done better

Complementary tools

You may find it helpful to use the Kipling Questions (What - Where – When - How - Why – Who) and the **5 Whys** to try to get to the root cause of issues.