After Action Review (AAR)

What is it?

An **AAR** is a simple review technique used by individuals or groups to capture feedback and 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, project or event to embody continuous learning and improvement as 'the way we work'. It enables you to identify and mitigate future risks.

However **AARs** can also be used to review operational processes within a team or across teams.

Benefits at a glance …

- embeds continuous learning and improvement
- ensures that learning is captured and acted upon
- gives people a voice and allows for a range of perspectives
- strengthens a team and builds trust

How to use it?

Arrange a meeting with relevant team members or other key people whose feedback you would welcome.   AAR consists of four simple questions:

- The first two focus on the positives – What is going well?   And why is that?   This allows you to capture good practice and ensure it is embedded in procedures and standard work.
- The second two questions allow you to understand what could be improved and flush out ideas for how this could be actioned.

1. What went/is going well?	3. What could be better?
2. **Why did/are these things going well?**	4. **How could these things be better?**

Action plan: It is really important that people see that actions are taken as a result of their feedback, and so building an action plan together at the end of the session is crucial. This is part of the template.

This process should strengthen the team, not divide it so, do ask an independent person to facilitate 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.