Managing People & Their Performance

SUMMARY

STRONG HERITAGE | STRONG FUTURE
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
TREFTADAETH GADARN | DYFODOL SICR

Managing People and Their Performance 'Guide and Toolkit' has been developed to assist those in a management role, providing advice, support and guidance along with a range of tools and techniques to help Managers reflect upon, review and, if necessary, refine their performance management approach and systems.

Its purpose is to help Managers with managing performance, not to replace any existing approaches that are operating effectively and positively contributing to the delivery of business plan priorities. If Managers are currently managing performance and having performance conversations with individuals and teams, and most importantly can evidence that they are doing this whether via up-to-date action plans, notes from one-to-ones (1-2-1s) and team meetings or more formal reviews, then the toolkit merely provides supplementary support materials when further advice and guidance is required.

When a team or Manager decides how they are going to implement the approach this must be agreed by the respective Head of Service and Director.

The complete 'Guide and Toolkit' is available to all Managers and is made up of the following sections:

Section 1: Managing People and Their Performance – An Overview

Section 2: The Role of People in Managing People and Performance

Section 3: Holding Effective Performance Meetings and 1-2-1s

Section 4: Creating Action Plans and Objective Setting

Section 5: Communicating for Performance

Section 6: The Annual Performance Review

Section 7: Links to other Processes

Section 8: Monitoring and Evaluation

Section 9: Must Do's and Recommendations

Section 10: Tools and Templates

In the summaries that follow, key points from Sections 1-8 are noted – illustrating the most important actions required for effective management of performance. For a deeper, more detailed understanding, Managers are advised to read the relevant section of the 'Guide and Toolkit'.

Section 01:
Managing People and Their Performance – The Overview

Managing People and Their Performance is simply a term used to describe a set of activities that assess whether goals or objectives (individual/business plan/Council) are being met. The activities recommended to Managers in following this approach are:

Day-to-day People & Performance Management Activities
- One-to-One Meetings (1-2-1) – formal and informal
- Team Meetings

The Annual Formal Review of Performance
- Annual Formal Review
- Feedback Meeting
- Setting objectives for next 6-12 months

Workforce Planning
- Using outcomes from the above to inform Workforce Planning

It's all about Communication

Whether formal or informal, performance management is based on three important principles:

1. Set clear expectations on performance including expectations on behaviour and attendance.

2. Provide fair and accurate feedback – both formal and informal.

3. Help to solve everyday problems.

When being done effectively, formal and informal processes are mutually supportive.

Maximising and Managing Attendance

Managers have a vital role to play in monitoring attendance and performance and they are responsible for creating an open and supportive environment at work where employees can talk about any problems, and seek help early. It is also a Manager's responsibility to take action if a member of their team is not delivering to the required standard – whether that is an issue with performance, attendance or behaviour.

How Can I Make This Work In My Area?

The Council has a very diverse workforce with very distinct areas and what works for one may not work for another. It is therefore vital that Managers look at this toolkit and assess what can work for them – it may be small steps at first, introducing more structured team meetings for example, but, steps, however small, must be taken.

Supporting Continuous Improvement

To help embed this culture, Internal Audit will have a role in reviewing the compliance of services against the mandatory elements of the toolkit and report back to the Corporate Management Team. Support and advice will be available through designated officers from Human Resources.

Section 02:
The Role of People in Managing People and Performance

Section 2 of the toolkit provides the Manager with guidelines as to the rights and responsibilities of those involved in Managing People and Their Performance to help support consistent approaches to people and business planning and performance.

It sets the rights and responsibilities for…
- Individual Employees (employed by the Council)
- The Manager
- Senior Managers (those who manage the Manager)

And looks at the Importance of Dialogue

Why? It looks at dialogue because what Managing People and Their Performance is all about is human interaction. Dialogue is critical for performance conversations because it shows that the Manager is open to listening and to working together.

The full range of rights and responsibilities for the individual, the Manager and the Senior Managers are detailed in Section 2. A selection of the Manager's responsibilities are detailed below:

All Managers have responsibilities to:

- Hold regular meetings with individuals and teams
- Keep updated notes from 1-2-1s/team meetings
- Ensure there is a clear understanding within their team about Council priorities that could impact upon their role
- Ensure there is a clear understanding within their team about specific targets and the impact of not achieving them
- Develop action plans with individuals/teams and monitor and evaluate progress against these on a regular basis
- Ensure there is an annual formal review on performance, whether at a team or individual level
- Provide regular and timely feedback
- Support individuals in the achievement of their objectives
- Provide management information regarding progress on priorities, areas of strength, skills gaps etc as and when necessary based on the results of the regular meetings
- Make Action Plans and other evidence around Managing People and Their Performance available for internal audit purposes

Section 03:
Holding Effective Performance Meetings and 1-2-1s

When Managers are looking to effectively manage performance 3 types of meeting are recommended:

- Individual (the 1-2-1, formal and informal)
- Team Meeting
- The Annual Formal Performance Review Feedback Meeting

The 1-2-1

- **Who is involved?**
  The Manager and the individual.

- **How long should the meeting last?**
  Can range from a 15 minute 'catch up' to a more formal meeting that may take 60 to 90 minutes.

- **How often is regular?**
  The recommendation is at least one face-to-face meeting each month. If the Service area requires a different approach this must be agreed by the respective Head of Service and Director.

- **Where should the meeting take place?**
  Any meetings to discuss or review performance should be held in private.

- **Who arranges the meeting?**
  Ultimately it is the Manager's responsibility however, when appropriate, this can be passed onto the individual.

- **What is going to be discussed?**
  Meetings can be informal 'catch-ups' or more in-depth 1-2-1 discussions and be informed by the priorities set within the business plan for the service.

- **How are the discussions and outcomes recorded?**
  Quick 'catch-ups' may not require any documentation. More formal 1-2-1 meetings will require notes of key actions, issues, progress, development needs, etc to be recorded.

Team Meetings

- **Who is involved?**
  The Manager and their team.

- **How long should the meeting last?**
  Depending on what is being discussed team meetings can range from an hour, 3 hours or even necessitate a half or full day.

- **How often is regular?**
  This guide recommends monthly or 6 weekly team meetings however this will depend on the team and working patterns.

- **Where should the meeting take place?**
  Team meetings should be held in an environment that is accessible and suitable for both the Manager and each member of their team.

- **Who arranges the meeting?**
  The Manager has responsibility for arranging team meetings.

- **How are the discussions and outcomes recorded?**
  It is recommended that Team Meetings have an Agenda available prior to the meeting (informed by the priorities set within the business plan for the service), and minutes produced and circulated post meeting.

The Annual Performance Review Meeting is covered under Section 6.

Section 04:
Creating Action Plans and Objective Setting

This section of the toolkit looks at:
- Action Plans
- Setting SMART objectives

Action Plans

- **What is an Action Plan?**
  The Action Plan is a working document that records current performance objectives and agreed development opportunities (in line with business plan priorities) and is owned and updated by the individual and counter-signed by the Manager.

- **Why do we need Action Plans?**
  The plan, in its simplest form, provides evidence of meetings, conversations and agreements between the Manager and the individual.

- **When should the plan be used?**
  Use the plan at any time. It is a working document and should be completed as and when progress or changes are made.

- **How is the plan completed?**
  Completing the plan is a two way process and must be as the direct result of the discussion between the Manager and the individual.

- **What does it look like?**
  The Action Plan must suit the requirements of the Manager and the individual – it could be a very brief document, or contain more detail. A template is available that can be adapted to suit requirements. It doesn't matter what it looks like as long as it records the relevant information.

Objective Setting

- **What are objectives?**
  Objectives describe what the individual is expected to achieve during the year. Competencies are important here as skills, knowledge and behaviours are used to achieve the objectives.

- **Objectives must be SMART**

  SPECIFIC   – clear and concise statement about what needs to be done

  MEASUREABLE   – uses concrete observable criteria such as cost, quality, quantity, revenue etc

  ACHIEVEABLE   – reasonable for the individual based on their demonstrated abilities and the challenge of the objective

  RELEVANT   – focused on a key outcome

  TIME RELATED   – includes a timetable for completion

- **How many objectives should be set?**
  Minimum 2, maximum 6 objectives.

Agreeing the Action Plan

All the areas on the Action Plan should be agreed upon by the Manager and the individual. Where agreement can not be reached it is recommended that other parties are called upon for support, e.g. Human Resources.

Section 05:
Communicating for Performance

One of the most fundamental elements of managing performance is communicating clearly and effectively. This section of the toolkit looks at:

- General Communication
- Giving Feedback
- Having Difficult Conversations

General Communication

- **Make it timely**
  Communication is most effective when it is relevant to the current situation, if something needs addressing do it sooner rather than later or the message will be lost.

- **Be honest**
  Honesty is the only policy, Managers must base communication on factual information rather than personal interpretation of the facts.

- **Keep it simple and straightforward**
  To avoid messages becoming diluted or misinterpreted, keep it simple.

- **Listen and acknowledge**
  All communication is two way. Acknowledgement is about taking on board what the individual is saying and understanding their feelings or opinions about the issue being debated before responding.

- **Be aware of signs of non-verbal communication**
  The tone of someone's voice, the language they use, and the words they don't say can be as important as what is actually being said.

Giving Feedback

- Feedback is an essential element of this approach and plays a part in the 1-2-1, the team meeting and the annual review.

- The way Managers deliver feedback to members of their team is critically important in terms of motivating individuals, boosting individual and team morale, and in engaging the team in delivering high quality services.

Difficult Conversations

A Manager's role is to manage and enhance performance on a day-to-day basis.

• **Be prepared**
A conversation is a two way discussion so Managers need to be prepared. It is important to have specific examples to illustrate the feedback given.

• **Starting the conversation**
Select a specific example, or couple of examples that illustrate the area of performance you want to address.

• **Avoid the "sandwich"**
This is a popular yet totally ineffective way of giving feedback. The approach suggests that you start with some positive feedback, slip in the difficult feedback about the performance issue that you wish to give and then end the discussion with more positive feedback. The effect of this approach is that the real message gets lost.

• **Describe your emotions about the issue**
This does not mean you have to give a detailed personal disclosure! It may simply be telling the individual that you feel uncomfortable giving this feedback or discussing their behaviour.

• **Clarify the impact the issue has on your service area**
When giving feedback, being clear about the impact this issue has not only on the Manager and individual, but the wider team and Service area.

• **Your role**
In such discussions, Managers should ask themselves what they have done or not done that has contributed to the issue.

• **Invite the individual to respond**
In discussing any performance or behavioural issue, once the Manager has outlined the position as they see it the individual should then be invited to respond to the issue raised.

• **Resolve the issue**
Raising the issue is all well and good but once it is brought out into the open it needs to be properly addressed and resolved. The aim is to improve the performance of the individual and ensure all parties are clear about what is expected in the future. Providing relevant and appropriate support is absolutely crucial at this point.

Section 06:
The Annual Performance Review

There is no 'one size fits all' template for the Performance Review. Managers will be afforded some degree of discretion in how the annual review is designed and implemented. This must be agreed by the relevant Head of Service and Director. Advice and support in developing and implementing reviews is available to all Managers via Human Resources.

- **Why is an Annual Formal Performance Review required?**
  The Annual Review will be a summary of the regular 1-2-1s and team meetings that have taken place throughout the year.

- **What does the Annual Performance Review look at?**
  Objectives
  How well the individual has progressed against their objectives
  (and in doing so, contributing to business plan priorities for the service).

  How the role is undertaken
  A review of the key behaviours, aptitudes and skills (competencies)
  required to perform effectively.

- **Who is involved?**
  The Manager - reviewing the individual's performance

  The role of the individual - self review

- **Involving others – Team Members / Peers**
  The decision as to whether, or not, to involve others in the review will remain at the discretion of the individual and the Manager. It is important to note that any additional reviewers need to give their consent to be included in the review. Human Resources can provide support where services wish to involve team members/peers in the review process.

What is the Reviewing Criteria?

The Annual Formal Performance Review will involve the individual/team being reviewed against:

- Agreed objectives – The 'What'
- Relevant behaviour, skill and aptitude statements chosen from their job family (Competency Framework) – The 'How'

- **What if the objectives have changed?**
  Managers must clarify objectives in the 1-2-1 meetings prior to the Formal Annual Review to eliminate the possibility of error.

- **How many objectives should an individual be reviewed against?**
  Minimum 2, maximum 6 objectives.

- **Reviewing against skills, behaviours and aptitudes – how the job is done, using the Competency Frameworks**
  To carry out a review on how the individual is performing Managers will need to use the Council's Competency Framework. Managers are advised to look at the categories (competency areas) within the job families and identify which are key to the individual successfully undertaking their role and achieving their objectives.

Carrying out the Review

To effectively carry out the review and prepare for the feedback meeting the Manager should:

- Dedicate an appropriate amount of time to carrying out the review
- Refer to the notes of 1-2-1s to evidence and support comments
- Carry out the review in an environment where they will not be disturbed
- Ensure comments are well founded and constructive
- Ensure any examples can be evidenced
- Do not use the Annual Formal Performance Review as the time to bring up, for the first time, issues around performance
- Use the scoring in Section 6 of the main toolkit when reviewing the competency statements
- Do not focus on scoring alone when it comes to the competency statements, each area should be reinforced with comments
- Remember that the individual will also be completing their self-review which will form a significant part of the feedback meeting

The Feedback Meeting

- **What to consider before the Annual Performance Review Meeting**
  The Manager and the individual being reviewed have a responsibility to prepare for the feedback meeting.

- **When to hold the meeting**
  The feedback meeting should take place within 2 weeks of the review and both the individual and Manager should have access to the results of the review prior to the meeting to allow time for preparation.

- **Where to hold the Feedback Meeting**
  Consider the environment in which the feedback is delivered.

- **The Way Forward**
  An agreement of SMART objectives for the coming year.

- **Recording Decisions and Plans**
  Updating Action Plans, including addressing development needs.

- **Linkages**
  Communication of Council, Service area and team priorities.

Developing the Action Plan & Setting Objectives for the next 12 months

An important outcome and requirement of the Review is the Action Plan.

All this information – what now?

If used effectively the data gathered can assist in many areas, including:

- Workforce planning, including Talent Management, Succession Planning, Role Redesign, Restructures, Recruitment and Selection
- Employee Wellbeing

If Managers go through the process and do nothing with the data, this will make it a pointless exercise that will not be welcomed, or valued, by those involved.

Monitoring Annual Reviews across the Council

An audit of Managing People and Performance could be undertaken at any time and within any area by Internal Audit – this could be entirely random or focused on areas where specific concerns have been identified. When such audits are undertaken evidence of the above will be required.

Section 07:
Links to other Processes

Managing People and Their Performance does not exist in a vacuum and will be of limited use if the outcomes do not link in to, and support, existing Council management practice, policies and procedures.

Outcomes Can Be Used To Inform Strategies and Plans

To develop a strategy Managers need to know what core behaviours and skills (competencies) are critical to the success of that strategy, therefore they need to know their workforce.

The outcomes from 1-2-1s, Team Meetings and Reviews will help Managers answer important questions such as:

- What competencies do my people currently demonstrate? `
- Are these the competencies that can move us forward?
- How well do they demonstrate these competencies?
- Do they have the potential to develop these competencies?
- Do they have the opportunity to develop these competencies?

Support in gathering, and understanding this information is available from Human Resources.

Organisational Capability

Through the effective management of people and their performance the Council is aiming to develop and enhance organisational capability.

Desired Outcomes

The desired outcome of managing people and their performance is the achievement of improved and sustained Council performance – making outcomes for the Service User and the public better than they would otherwise be – through the management and development of an informed, capable, available, adaptive, effective and engaged workforce.

Links to Workforce Planning

Managing People and their Performance can help Managers with Workforce Planning in a number of ways. The better the workforce intelligence data a Manager has access to, the better informed, and more accurate, the workforce plan.

Where Are We Now?

What do Managers know about the individuals within their team? What do they know about their current priorities, objectives, skills or development areas? What do they do well? What are their challenges?

Where Are We Going And How Are We Going To Get There?

This can include a range of Workforce Planning Activities such as:

- Identifying skill gaps
- Planning future learning and development
- Identifying critical posts
- Talent management/Succession planning.

Section 08:
Monitoring and Evaluation

Implementing 'Managing People and their Performance' is not an end in itself. It is vital that Managers constantly quality assess and evaluate both how they do it – reflecting upon meetings, briefings, conversations, objective setting – and how it contributes to the performance of their team – is it doing what it originally set out to do?

Evaluation can be done through:

- **Upwards feedback**
  Where Managers ask those they manage for feedback as to how they are managed.

- **Manager Feedback**
  In 1-2-1s, Annual Reviews etc the Manager should encourage others to feedback to them how they feel they are performing as a Manager.

- **Team Meetings**
  When team meetings are held Managers are advised to ask those who have attended the meeting to evaluate how they felt the meeting went – this can give regular, ongoing quality assessment.

- **Self Reflection**
  Self reflection can identify areas for development, mistakes to learn from and successes to replicate.

The Role of Internal Audit

Internal Audit has been assigned responsibility for reviewing compliance with the Managing People and Their Performance Approach. This will take the form of specific services being selected for review on a periodic basis and will cover areas such as:

- Checking that day-to-day performance management activities are being undertaken (spot-checking evidence of 1-2-1s/team meetings/notes from 1-2-1s / minutes/agendas etc)
- Checking that Formal Annual Review activities are being undertaken (checking evidence of individual reviews/feedback meetings/quality of Action Plans/existence of team development plans etc)
- Reporting to Corporate Management Team and/or directly to Group Directors on areas where good practice exists and also areas where improvement is required.

It is therefore imperative that appropriate records are maintained by the Manager and individuals to demonstrate the People Performance Management arrangements in place.

Evaluating 'Managing People and Their Performance'

It is important to the individual, the Manager, Senior Management and the Council to constantly evaluate the effectiveness of the components of Managing People and Their Performance. Evaluation can be carried out via surveys, focus groups, 1-2-1s and findings should be acted upon. It is recommended that evaluation is undertaken on a yearly basis and support is available from Human Resources.

Conclusion:

As stated at the beginning of this document, managing and monitoring the performance of individuals and teams has always been the role of the Manager. This approach provides Managers with the activities that can lead to effective performance management.

The full toolkit provides detailed advice and guidance around the key points covered in this summary booklet and is available to all Managers.