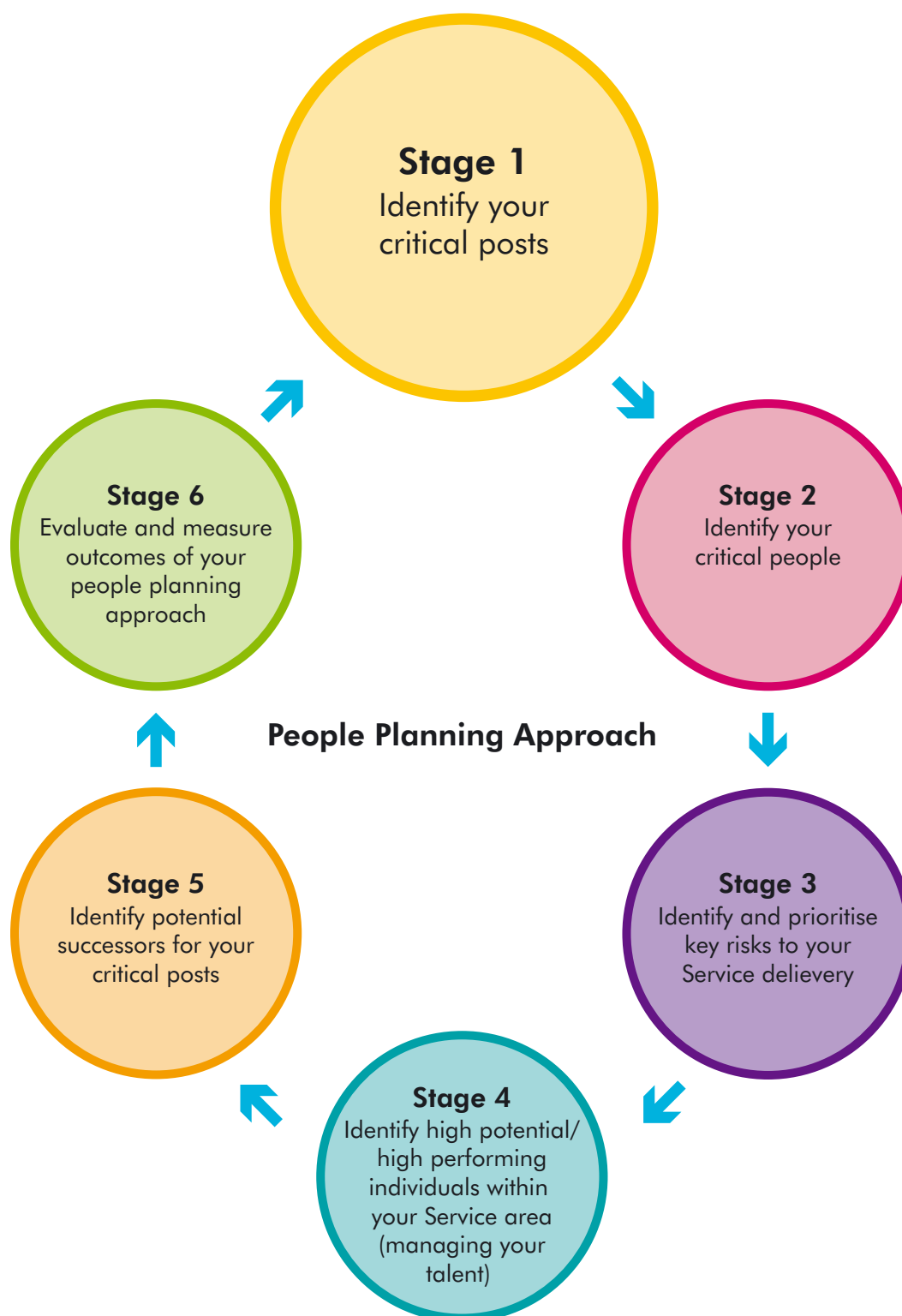




PEOPLE PLANNING TOOLKIT

Stage 1: Identifying your Critical Posts







What is Critical Post Analysis?

Critical Post Analysis is simply a methodology for identifying which posts within your Service area are vital to ensuring continuity in the delivery of your services in the event of unforeseen circumstances. Such circumstances may include, for example, covering long-term sickness absence of a key role, unexpected resignations, or even inclement weather that prevents large numbers of your employees being able to reach the workplace.

Once you have identified the posts that are critical to delivering your Services, the real value of this analysis is in understanding what makes the post “critical” and what mechanisms you can put in place to minimise the risk of disruption to your service.

What makes a post ‘critical’?

The basis on which posts are identified as “critical” in this type of analysis is based solely on whether the posts, or elements of the post, are critical to the business needs of your Service area or to the Council.

Within the Council, a post’s criticality is assessed against the importance of the role in meeting the following criteria:

- Business continuity
- Achieving Council objectives/priorities
- Ease of recruiting into post
- Impact on service delivery of postholder leaving post e.g. retirement, resignation, ill-health

Hints and tips:

It is tempting to rate posts according to grade: that is rating higher graded jobs as more critical to the Council’s business needs than lower graded jobs. However, in order for this analysis to be meaningful, you should try to avoid this at all costs and rate posts objectively against the criteria set out above.

Hints and tips:

*Just because a post may not be identified as “critical” in accordance with the above definition, it **does not** mean that it is not valued within your Service area or the Council, nor does it mean that the post is at risk of being lost from your Establishment.*

Analysing your critical posts is not something you will need to do on a regular basis. However, it is recommended that this analysis should be done at

least annually or if you are considering re-structuring your Service area as the criticality of posts will change over time as the demand for your services change.

Critical Post Analysis Tool

To support you in identifying your critical posts within your Service area, the following tool has been developed for you to use as and when required.

[Insert link to Critical Post Analysis data tool]

General guidance on undertaking Critical Post Analysis is set out below and detailed step by step guidance on how to use the tool is set out in Appendix 1. However, if you need further information or practical support in using this tool, contact the **People Development Team** on **01443 424159** or **01443 424082**.

Guidelines for populating the Critical Post Analysis Tool

Before beginning to populate the Critical Post Analysis tool, you should contact the People Development Team on 01443 424082 to request that all available employee data for your Service area is populated into the data template for you. Employee data that is available and will be pre-populated into the data template includes:

- Employee number
- Surname
- Forename
- Contract Type
- Section Description
- Sub-section Description
- Post Reference
- Post Title
- Post Grade Description
- Date of birth (only populated for those employees over age 50)
- Age in Years (only populated for those employees over age 50)

You should then consider each identified post and rank the post (NOT the individual) against the following criteria.

Hints and tips:

At this stage of the analysis you are considering only the post. You are not considering the way the postholder performs in this post.



Business Continuity

This section looks at the impact of each post on business continuity. In making any assessment in this area, it is important to consider the impact on the business if that role was not covered within the following timescales:

- 1 month
- 2-3 month
- 3 months plus

Scoring system for Business Continuity

Hints and tips:

The scoring system is entirely arbitrary and is used only to differentiate between those posts that are considered by you to be of low, average, high or acute criticality in terms of the criteria being considered. The total score is of no relevance to this analysis and does not mean that if one post scores higher than another overall it is therefore more critical. It will be down to you as the manager to consider the individual scores across all criteria and identify what action needs to be taken to minimise the risks associated with each to your Service area.

Score 1

Low criticality – little or no impact as not essential to business continuity at this time and/or can be covered easily by another post with no adverse effect.

Score 2

Average criticality – some impact on business continuity of service delivery at this time but can be covered relatively easily by another post.

Score 3

High criticality – impacts greatly on continuity of service delivery at this point in time, difficult to cover due to nature of post (technical/specialist skills/specific training) / impact on other roles (and cover available for them).

Score 4

Acute criticality – severe impact on business continuity with risk of service failure. Difficult to cover due to demands/strategic elements of role, professional/technical expertise, specialisms, essential qualifications.

Examples of Scoring for Business Continuity

Hints and tips:

The following examples are for illustrative purposes only. You should score your posts based on your in-depth knowledge of your Service area.

Example 1

The absence of a team manager of a well established team may not have an impact on service delivery for the first month of absence and would therefore not be categorised as critical during this time (Score 2 – Business Continuity, 1 month)

As the absence progresses into the 2-3 month category this may increase the level of criticality as the team is missing the strategic skills and direction of the manager (Score 3 – Business Continuity, 2-3 months).

After 3 months, the level of criticality of the role becomes identified at the highest level as the team has no team manager to lead them strategically, represent them at a Council-wide level or communicate key objectives and priorities (Score 4 – Business Continuity, 3 months plus).

Example 2

The absence of a Cremator Operator may have a high level of criticality in the first month of absence due to the technical requirements/health and safety knowledge required for the role and therefore may be scored highly at this point (Score 4 – Business Continuity, 1 month).

As the absence progresses into the 2-3 month category, the level of criticality may decrease as operators from other crematoriums are called in to cover the post (Score 3 – Business Continuity, 2-3 months).

After 3 months, the level of criticality may decrease again as other members of staff may be trained/recruited accordingly to cover the role (Score 2 – Business Continuity, 3 months plus).

Hints and tips:

Use the field entitled "Rationale" to capture your reasons for scoring a post the way you have. Whilst this field is not mandatory it will save you time when you come to review your analysis and will give you ready information if you find yourself needing to evidence why you scored a post in a certain way.



Business objectives/priorities

This looks at the impact of the post on achieving the Council's business objectives/priorities.

Scoring system for Business objectives/priorities

Hints and tips:

The scoring system is entirely arbitrary and is used only to differentiate between those posts that are considered by you to be of low, average, high or acute criticality in terms of the criteria being considered. The total score is of no relevance to this analysis and does not mean that if one post scores higher than another overall it is therefore more critical. It will be down to you as the manager to consider the individual scores across all criteria and identify what action needs to be taken to minimise the risks associated with each to your Service area.

Score 1

Low criticality – little or no impact on achieving the Council's objectives/priorities and/or can be covered easily by another post with no adverse effect.

Score 2

Average criticality – some impact on achieving the Council's objectives/priorities but can be covered relatively easily by another post.

Score 3

High criticality – impacts greatly on achieving the Council's objectives/priorities, difficult to cover due to nature of post (technical/specialist skills/specific training)/impact on other roles (and cover available for them).

Score 4

Acute criticality – severe impact on achieving the Council's objectives/priorities with threat of service failure/financial repercussions, difficult to cover due to demands/strategic elements of role, professional/technical expertise, specialisms, essential qualifications.

Example of scoring for Business objectives/priorities

Hints and tips:

The following examples are for illustrative purposes only. You should score your posts based on your in-depth knowledge of your Service area.

Example 1

The role of a Head of Service is paramount to the achievement of the Council's objectives/priorities for many reasons including: setting the strategic direction for the service area; representing/championing the service area through attendance on Senior Management Groups/committees; professional knowledge/skills and expertise (Score 4).

Example 2

The role of an Education Welfare Officer is critical in achieving the Council's objectives of supporting pupils and families in times where there may be difficulties in attending school. They also initiate legal proceedings where the situation necessitates it. The Council has a commitment to enabling children to attend school and receive an education and the work of the EWO also contributes to the Local Authority Children and Young People Plan (Score 3).



Ease of Recruiting

This looks at how easy it would be to recruit the right person with the right skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours into the post if the current individual decided to leave the Council/move posts.

Scoring system for Ease of Recruiting

Hints and tips:

The scoring system is entirely arbitrary and is used only to differentiate between those posts that are considered by you to be of low, average, high or acute criticality in terms of the criteria being considered. The total score is of no relevance to this analysis and does not mean that if one post scores higher than another overall it is therefore more critical. It will be down to you as the manager to consider the individual scores across all criteria and identify what action needs to be taken to minimise the risks associated with each to your Service area.

Score 1

Low criticality – easy post to recruit into, no shortage of appropriately skilled applicants both internally and externally. Quick turnaround in replacing individual into post.

Score 2

Average criticality – fairly easy post to recruit into, slightly less appropriately skilled applicants but still sufficient to provide a good range of options.

Score 3

High criticality – a more difficult post to recruit into due to nature of post (technical/specialist skills/specific training) and/or qualifications required.

Score 4

Acute criticality – very difficult post to recruit into due to a number of issues:

- Nature of post (technical/specialist skills/strategic or management capabilities/leadership skills)
- Qualifications required (professional/legislative)
- The job itself (unsociable hours; undesirable location; salary/competition from other sectors)



Making Critical Post Analysis work for you

It is important to remember that whether or not a post is critical will change over time due to a range of factors, Council priorities may change, new legislation may be introduced, the supply of labour may increase or decrease and demand for Council services may fluctuate or even change completely. It is recommended that this analysis is revisited on an annual basis, or whenever major changes are due to be implemented, such as an organisational restructure.

Once you have completed your Critical Post Analysis, the real value of this analysis is gained from considering and where appropriate addressing the following issues:

- Do you have the right individuals with the right skills, knowledge and behaviours in your Critical Posts? If not, how will you address this?
- Is there any scope for other posts to cover some or all of the critical elements of your Critical Posts to minimise the risk to your Service area of the postholder leaving the Service area, or needing to be absent from the role for a period of time?
- Within your Service area, what are the technical skills and/or behaviours that will be needed in the future to meet your business priorities that aren't available now or may be difficult to obtain into the future? Why?
- What technical skills and/or behaviours do your people possess that are attractive to outside employers and which present possible retention risks? Who are your competitors for these skills and behaviours?
- What do you think needs to happen to ensure that your Service area has the right people to achieve your business needs in the short, medium and longer term?
- What impact do you think changing demand for your services will have on your people, for example, in terms of skill requirements, numbers of people delivering the service, working hours etc?

Key links to Council policies and practices

Analysing your Critical Posts in itself is of little value to you. The real value lies in identifying strategies that will ensure you have the right people in your Critical Posts and to minimise the disruption to your Service area should an individual in a Critical Post be either unable to attend work or choose to leave this post. Key policies and practices that influence your development of effective strategies include the following:

- The Council's Recruitment and Selection policy and procedures
- Using effective selection techniques to ensure you recruit the right person into your Critical Posts e.g. psychometric testing, assessment centres, practical tests
- The Council's Capability policy to ensure that any performance issues are dealt with as early as possible and in a positive and supportive manner
- The Council's Emergency Planning procedures
- Regularly reviewing, and where appropriate, re-designing jobs to meet the changing needs of the Service area

For further information or practical support in addressing the above issues, contact the People Development Team on 01443 424159 or 01443 424082.



Appendix 1 – How to use the Critical Post Analysis Tool

Step 1

Contact the People Development Team on 01443 424082 to request the data you require to analyse. You will need to confirm which Sections and Sub-Sections you need and the People Development Team will organise the data collection via the Vision Support Team.

Please note that all requests for data must be made through the People Development Team. Please do not contact the Vision Support Team directly.

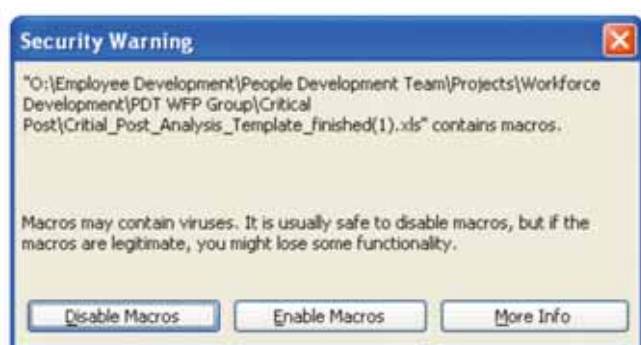
Step 2

Once you have confirmed the data required this will be requested on your behalf. The data will be sent to the People Development Team representative who will 'drop' this data into the Critical Post Analysis Template. The populated template will then be forwarded to you as an email attachment for scoring and analysis.

(Please note that the turnaround time for receiving data will vary from a couple of days to 2 weeks depending on the volume of requests).

Step 3

Double click on the attachment to open the Excel document. If the following box appears when opening your document, click on the 'Enable Macros' button.



Step 4

Once opened your document will have data populated in columns A-L, this includes:

- Employee Number
- Surname
- Forename
- Contract Type
- Section Description
- Subsection Description

- Post Ref
- Post Title
- Post Grade Description
- Work Location
- Date of Birth (for those who are 50 and over only)
- Age in Years (for those who are 50 and over only)

Please check the data to ensure it is accurate.

If there are any anomalies, contact the People Development Team representative. It is important you do this to ensure that the Vision system is updated accordingly.

Step 5

Once you are satisfied with the data received you can begin to score your posts according to their 'criticality'. Posts are scored according to the following criteria:

- Business Continuity (Columns N,O,P)
- Achievement of Council Objectives / Priorities (Column R)
- Ease of Recruitment (Column T)

The document only allows entries of the data 1, 2, 3 or 4 into these columns. You can do this by either typing in the number or choosing from the drop down list accessed by clicking on the drop down arrow on the corner of the cell as illustrated below:

	M	N	O
		Business Continuity (1 month)	Business Continuity (3 month)
1			
2			
3			

As the scoring is input the cells will become colour coded using a red, amber and green system to assist you visually.

- Score 4 – Acute Criticality (Red)
- Score 3 – High Criticality (Amber)
- Scores 2 and 1 – Average & Low Criticality (Green)

Guidance on the scoring procedure can be found on pages 5-9.



Step 6

Potential Leavers –

Contingency / Succession Planning

Column L will highlight those who could potentially be thinking of leaving in the near future through routes such as retirement or VER. These details are also colour coded:

- Age 50 – 55 years (Green)
- Age 55 – 60 years (Amber)
- Age 60 plus (Red)

The aim of this section is to highlight the potential knowledge, skills, experience and other areas of expertise that could be lost due to retirement of key individuals and to enable managers to maintain this knowledge and experience and make provisions for such skills and behaviours to be transferred to other individuals within the Service area.

Hints and tips:

Please note you do not have to complete the scoring for all posts at the same time. Simply save the document using the 'Save As' function and re-open it when you are ready to continue scoring your posts.

Step 7

Populating Columns V-AA

The population of these columns help build a more holistic picture of the Critical Post Analysis and also enables you to provide the rationale for your scoring. It will also assist when looking at other areas of People Planning such as Succession Planning and Talent Management.

Column V – Role Related Training and Development Period

The purpose of this column is to get you thinking about how long it would take to get a new starter / existing employee functioning fully in the role if the current employee was to leave / move roles. For some roles this may be fairly a fairly short period of time, whereas for other roles it could take a substantially longer amount of time for the person to become suitably independent and operational in the role. This may be due to essential training that is required for the role, the time taken to gain the requisite knowledge/develop key skills or obtaining specific qualifications in order to be allowed to carry out the role, for example, certain health and safety training.

Column X – Rationale

Enter here the justification for / reasoning behind your score. This can prove very valuable when you review your posts and provides an audit trail that supports your decisions.

Column Y – Qualification Essential to Role

Detail here any qualifications that are essential to the role.

Column Z – Does the current employee have the qualification?

This column only accepts a Yes or No response. If the current employee is working towards the qualification enter No as full details can be put in the next column.

Column AA – Is the person studying towards the qualification, if so what progress has been made?

Please put detail of any qualification currently being undertaken by the current employee in the role. Note: such qualifications should be essential to the role.

Step 8

Talent Management

Column AB – Talent Management Definition, has been included as an optional extra for those of you who have identified the talent within your Service area. If you have not identified your talent within your Service area please leave this column blank. For guidance on identifying talent within your Service area please refer to the following guide of this toolkit Stage 4: Managing your talent.

If you have identified your talent within your Service area, Column AB allows you to choose from the categories using the drop down list in the right hand corner of the cell as detailed below:



For further information on Talent Management please contact the People Development Team on 01443 424159 or 01443 424082.

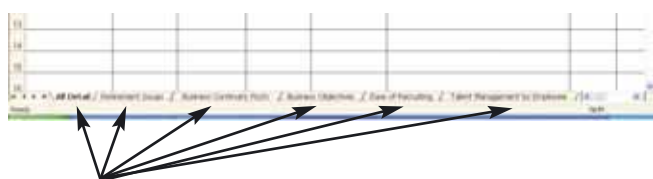


Step 9

Filtering Your Results – Additional Worksheets

Please note – prior to filtering your results and utilising the additional worksheets you must complete all scoring, see Steps 5 and 6. Although not essential, it would be very beneficial to complete columns A – AA prior to filtering otherwise valuable information will not be carried over.

The Workbook consists of 6 worksheets as illustrated below:



Once you have completed your scoring, and entered your findings into the other columns, you may find it easier to look at the different areas individually and the worksheets allow you to do this.

Worksheet Detail

All detail

This is the main worksheet where you carry out your scoring and enter the data into the columns.

Retirement Issues

Using a Macro Button (see step 10), only those highlighted as potential leavers (i.e. aged 50 plus) will be brought through onto this worksheet.

Business Continuity Posts

Using a Macro Button (Step 10), only those scoring a 3 or a 4 under Business Continuity will be brought through onto this worksheet.

Business Objectives

Using a Macro Button (Step 10), only those scoring a 3 or a 4 under Business Objectives will be brought through onto this worksheet.

Ease of Recruiting

Using a Macro Button (Step 10), only those scoring a 3 or a 4 under Ease of Recruiting will be brought through onto this worksheet.

Talent Management by Employee

Using a Macro Button (Step 10), only those who have been identified through the Talent Management process and have had a category entered into column AB will be brought through onto this worksheet.

Step 10

Using the Macro Button to Filter Your Results

Once you have completed your scoring on the main worksheet and entered the additional details single click on the next worksheet, e.g. Retirement Issues.

You will see a box with the instruction, 'Click when ready':



Please click once on the box to draw through your filtered results.

The same process applies to each worksheet and can be carried out in any order.

Please note that the colour coding is lost when the filter is applied on the additional worksheets although it does remain on your main worksheet.

Step 11

Analysing Your Results

Gathering the data and completing the scoring and additional information columns is the first stage of Critical Post Analysis. The second stage is examining the data, seeing what concerns are highlighted, what gaps are uncovered and what areas are more of a risk to your service delivery than others. This will lead you to the 'What can we do about this?' stage, which may involve discussions, debate and decisions.

Final Note

It is important to remember that whether or not a post is critical will change over time due to a range of factors, Council priorities may change, there may be new legislation introduced, the supply of labour may increase or decrease and demand for Council services may fluctuate. It is recommended that the process is revisited on an annual basis, or whenever major changes are due to be implemented, such as an organisational restructure.

For further information or practical support in analysing your Critical Posts please contact the People Development Team on 01443 424159 or 01443 424082.



Manager Checklist

Action	Completed
1. Contact People Development Team to request employee data for analysis	
2. Check all data is correct. If not, inform People Development Team	
3. Rank each post in your Service area against following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business continuity - Achieving Council objectives/priorities - Ease of recruiting into post - Impact on service delivery of post-holder leaving post 	
4. Fill in any other relevant data	
5. Set time aside to review data and identify what issues this highlights for your Service area	
6. Revisit your analysis as appropriate e.g. annually, prior to any internal changes or following any external changes that may impact on your Service area.	