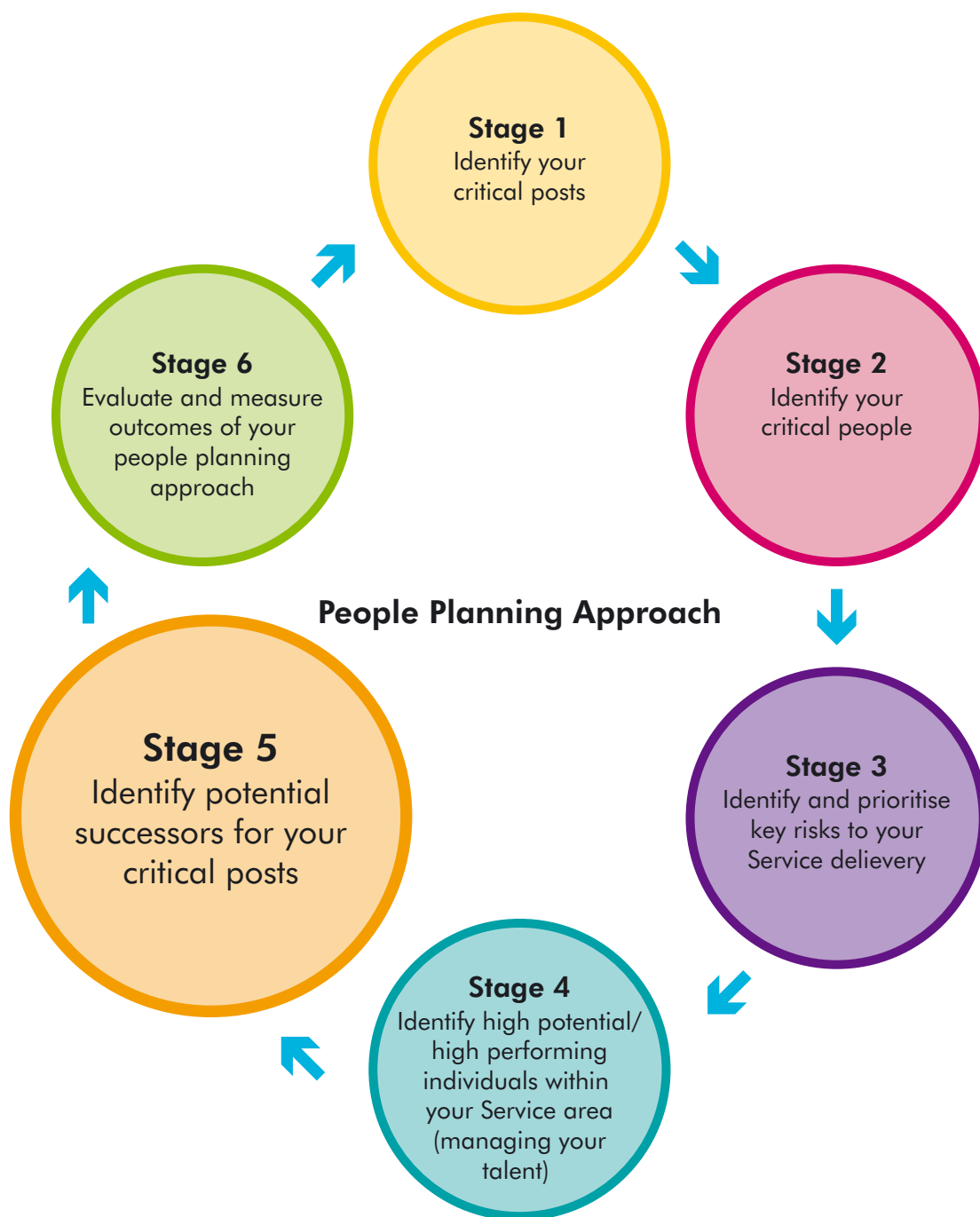




PEOPLE PLANNING TOOLKIT

Stage 5: Managing succession in your Service area







What is succession management?

There are a number of definitions of succession management used in practice, but in its most simple form, succession management is a systematic and deliberate activity to ensure an organisation's future capability to fill vacancies. It specifically focuses on ensuring the availability and sustainability of a supply of capable employees who are ready to assume key or critical roles if selected through the usual competitive processes. Such successors may be fairly ready to do the job (short-term successors) or seen as having longer-term potential (long-term successors).

Managing succession is not an end in itself or an add-on activity. It forms part of the Council's broader approach to workforce planning which seeks to ensure that the right people are in the right place at the right time to achieve successful outcomes.

Hints and tips:

Effective succession management focuses on the changing nature of work and the sorts of roles that are likely to emerge in the future rather than focusing on current roles which may not be required in the future.

It must be emphasised, however, that managing succession is not about targeting the "chosen few" and promising them promotion – it is about building the capability of groups of employees within the Council who can then collectively compete on merit for vacant posts. The Council's approach to managing succession does not mean that individuals will be automatically slotted into critical posts that become vacant.

Hints and tips:

Succession management should not be confused with providing emergency cover, temporary cover or deputising for absent staff.

What is the difference between managing succession and managing talent?

Managing succession is the end goal of effective talent management. One of the aims of a talent management programme is to create pools of talent that can be tapped into to compete for higher-level vacancies that might arise in the future, focusing on the individual skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours that make those employees successful in the future. Without talent management it is impossible to produce a meaningful succession plan.

Why is managing succession important for the Council?

Managing succession generates a number of benefits for the Council. By identifying employees with the skills, knowledge, experience and demonstrating the required behaviours to take on alternative roles at the earliest opportunity, the Council has a longer lead time to provide these employees with a wide range of developmental experiences. This then generates significant benefits in terms of:

- Ensuring the Council has the right individuals to fill the right roles to function at peak efficiency
- Helping the Council to consider how its Critical Posts may change into the future and to plan development opportunities that will ensure individuals develop the appropriate skill sets and behaviours to meet these changing needs
- Helping the Council to prepare for and deal with unexpected events such as long-term illness or the sudden departure of employees in Critical Posts
- Addressing the issues of dealing with an ageing workforce and ensuring knowledge and skills are effectively transferred to others in the event that employees in Critical Posts decide to retire
- Ensuring the continuity of quality services



Roles & Responsibilities

Effective succession management relies on genuine collaboration between a number of key players, to build the required capability and readiness within the Council.

Senior managers and their line managers are the owners of the process. Their role includes:

- Championing the process within their Service areas and driving the implementation
- Making key decisions about critical roles and high potential employees
- Conducting career conversations
- Assisting in identifying development needs
- Working collaboratively with other managers to identify and implement real development experiences and minimise barriers to their implementation

Human Resources are responsible for facilitating the overall process, developing the tools and systems to support decision-making by management.

Employees who are the focus of the process and whose role it is to develop personal insight, commit to the development process and maintain high performance through challenging developmental experiences.

The principles underpinning succession planning

- Succession planning needs to encompass
 - Short term planning/emergency replacement
 - Long term planning/managing talent
- Succession planning within the Council is about identifying groups of employees to work on developing their strengths and experience. In this way the Council is not relying on one person to fill a specific role and this offers protection against the risk that any identified or potential successor may leave to pursue other career opportunities.
- Succession planning is not an annual “one off” event. It is a cyclical and continuous process that is driven by a defined and accepted set of behaviours and skills that support the required high performing culture within the Council.
- Succession planning does not take into consideration every post within the Council, but rather identifies the key posts that are required to ensure the sustainability of services provided by the Council. Usually, all senior management and senior professional roles are considered initially. However, consideration should also be given to:
 - Posts specifically oriented to local government (for example, Environmental Health, Town Planners, Trading Standards officers etc)
 - Difficult to fill posts
 - Posts that require very long periods to develop replacements to the required level (for example, posts that require particular skills, knowledge or experience which are in scarce supply)
 - Posts that are critical in delivering front line services
- No promises are made to employees that are identified as high potential and participate in accelerated development programmes that they will actually receive promotion or will move into more senior roles. Instead, the Council commits to help employees prepare themselves to qualify for higher level responsibilities. But it is up to each employee to continue to perform well in their current job whilst also preparing themselves to meet the new challenges at higher levels of responsibility. Successfully implemented, when a vacancy occurs, the Council will have a pool of internal candidates ready to meet the challenge.
- Succession planning requires more of a commitment to a longer-term, strategic view of how to meet talent needs than short-term and sometimes panic-driven, efforts to fill vacancies as they occur.



Key links to Council policies and practices

Succession planning cannot stand alone. It is only of value if it is carefully aligned with the Council's priorities and its outcomes actually influence the quality of potential candidates to fill key roles within the Council. It therefore needs to link with:

- The Council's Recruitment and Selection policy
- Strategies for developing skills which will be needed over the coming years
- Individual development plans for those identified as high potential. These are part of the succession process and should lead to both relevant job experience and key skill training/coaching
- Assessment processes which need to feed information into succession plans, for example from appraisal. This is part of the move to base judgements of potential on evidence against skills and behaviours needed for the job. It is important these cover job specific and functional skills as well as more generic skills and behaviours. Employees need to be aware which sources of assessment information might be used in this way



Succession planning template

The following template can be used to identify your succession requirements within your Service area. You can collate and summarise all the information that you've gathered at each stage of the People Planning approach in this one document.

You should note, however, that the ultimate outcome of effective succession planning is not completing the template below on an annual basis. Succession planning is a learning process for all involved and is a process for pro-actively developing your employees. The emphasis of succession planning should also be less about "the plan" and more about the dialogue and the valuable database of information that is built up over time through the entire process. As managers, you have to learn what works best for your Service area given its unique structure and resourcing issues.

The key to effective succession planning therefore is learning to have open and honest dialogue with your employees about their strengths and weaknesses and how best to support their career development. This can be difficult at first and your succession planning process will therefore evolve over time as your structures and needs change and you find out what works best for you.

Succession Planning Template

Post Title	Post Holder Name	Retirement Status	Criticality	Number of Staff Ready Now (Emergency/Short Term)	Number of Staff Ready in 1-2 yrs (Medium Term)	Number of Staff Ready in 3-5 yrs (Long Term)

Retirement Status:

- A: Retirement likely within 1 year
- B: Retirement likely within 3 years
- C: Retirement eligible within 5 years

Criticality:

- 1: **Critical** - Ready immediately
- 2: **Very Important** - Required within 6 to 12 months
- 3: **Fairly Important** - Required within 2 to 3 years



Manager checklist

Action	Completed
1. Consider your current Critical Posts and how these posts may change in the futures/as demand for your services change	
2. Identify potential successors for your Critical Posts based on the future requirements of these roles. Note: your succession plan may cover more than just your Critical Posts – it is entirely your decision	
3. Complete the succession planning template using data gathered at each stage of the People Planning approach	
4. Review your succession plan on a regular basis to ensure it is up to date and meaningful to your Service area	