

Managers Guidance: Performance and Development Review

The Performance and Development Review discussion provides a unique opportunity to hold an in depth and meaningful discussion about achievements, challenges, areas for development, suitability for progression and other career aspirations on an individual level that is usually not possible on a general basis. For this reason time allocated for this discussion can be precious and sought after, for both you and your employee. As the manager if you approach the discussion and prioritise your preparation for it on this basis it is more likely to be a productive meeting. The attitude you bring to the purpose and value of this meeting is likely to have a major impact on your employee's morale, and productivity, and potentially their wellbeing too.

Remember this is a key opportunity to discuss what **each of you** think about performance and (crucially) why. A strong and open discussion could result in either or both of you altering your perspectives. If you approach it in this way you do not need feel that the discussion will be unnecessarily contentious. Think of this as a way to explore each of your own 'hilltops' (the view from where you are standing. This has been echoed in our customer care training). Ultimately as the manager you will need to reach a conclusion on performance and suitability for progression but resist any temptation to do this until you have had a full and frank discussion.

The PDR form highlights five main areas;

- **Looking Back**
- **Looking Forward**
- **Wellbeing & Aspirations,**
- **Development Summary; and**
- **Overall Assessment of Performance.**

These areas of discussions have been sectioned and ordered on the PDR form to reflect the most likely flow of your discussion and for ease of reference. However, there is no right or wrong order in which to approach the PDR discussion. It is best if the conversation remains as fluid as possible. Ideally the employee being assessed will do most of the talking with the manager directing the conversation to ensure maximum value is gained from the available time. This requires strong coaching skills for which all managers can receive training¹. The PDR is not the time to bring up any new and nasty surprises though this does provide the opportunity for a depth of conversation that may bring new issues to light. This is healthy because a good outcome from the discussion is that both the manager and their employee understand the requirements of the role (and any challenges) better.

Remember to talk to other key parties as a part of your preparation. If, for example, you are new to managing the particular employee it may be appropriate for the previous manager to discuss and/or be involved with the 'Looking Back' element.

¹Please remind yourselves of the principles of coaching from your training, or discuss with your own line manager (who can liaise with the HR team if you would like a refresher).

You can also consider 360 feedback (i.e. feedback from peers, others within the team, Members, partners, or other stakeholders the individual interacts with as a part of their job. If so there is a guidance form you can use for this purpose on MyHR. (You should remember to feedback anonymously as it is rarely helpful to identify the source of specific feedback).

Looking Back

This section encourages reflection and discussion of the individual's work over the previous 12 months.

Tasks and objectives

Consider whether these have been met over the previous 12 months. Objectives may have changed over time or there may have been particular and unanticipated challenges completely outside the employee's control. These should be fully discussed, recognised and recorded. Depth of discussion may depend on the breadth and depth of the role. Any specific task orientated objectives may present an opportunity for assessment as to whether they have been met (or not met) and why. More complex objectives may need a broader discussion about overall achievement.

Remember to include activities that support the organisation as a whole that are not within the individual's job description (e.g. staff representative, customer care champion or joining or leading a cross departmental project). For these it may be appropriate to seek feedback from others as part of your preparation.

Behaviours

The behavioural skills of active listening, respect, caring, trustworthiness and leadership are key to all roles within the council, as reflected in our **Values**. Additionally there may be more specific behaviours required from a particular role (often reflected in the person specification for that role). Particular emphasis on individual behaviours, and the way in which it is realistic to expect the values to be demonstrated, will be dependent on the context for the role. (This was the work that all BMs did with their teams as part of the roll out of the values at launch). Any individual in a customer facing role (or acting in that capacity) for example may have a particular emphasis on the behaviours in keeping with our [customer promise](#).

While some behaviours may be more obvious than others in particular roles, you are expected to take this opportunity to discuss how strongly, or otherwise, these skills have been demonstrated, together with any others that you believe are particularly appropriate to that role. This conversation is opinion based so be prepared to discuss why you hold your view, and do not position your view as final until you have understood the employee's perspective sufficiently. It is most likely that a coaching approach² to this conversation will work best.

Documents it is useful to refer to for your preparation of this meeting include the following:

- Employee's preparation form for the PDR
- Employee's Current Job Description and Person Specification

² Please remind yourselves of the principles of coaching from your training, or discuss with your own line manager (who can liaise with the HR team if you would like a refresher).

- MVDC Values
- The interpretation of MVDC Values (and the behaviours that demonstrate them in the context of the work each team formulated either at the time the values were developed, or subsequently)
- Your service plan
- Current corporate strategy
- Organogram of your team structure³
- For management reviews - It is also advisable to review the information and statistics in relation to Health & Safety compliance for their team(s) via [Pentana](#). Contact a member of the Risk and Performance team for an overview as to compliance with management functions where relevant.

Identify with the individual which values you both believe to be most prominent and relevant to their role and how they have demonstrated their understanding and commitment to these in their work and interaction with colleagues and customers.

Identify with the individual which values are not demonstrated as fully and why. Identify any opportunity to develop behaviours in these areas.

Sample questions

The questions below should not be viewed as a checklist. They are intended to give ideas of some things to have in your mind and as a starting point for discussion to understand each other's perspectives.

- Does the employee believe he/she achieved what was expected? What reasons can they give for this view?
- Does the employee consider his/her work over the past 12 months to be goal orientated/task driven or more complex?
- Does the employee believe his/her objectives for their role were as anticipated in their last PDR? If not, why do they think they have changed?
- Does the employee believe his/her performance in the identified areas of work was as anticipated?
- Does the employee believe he/she has demonstrated MVDCs values in their day to day work?
- Did the employee have other key accountabilities or relationships outside your team?
- How does he/she believe they performed in these areas?
- How does he/she believe their performance compares to the previous years?
- If there is a notable difference from the previous year, why does he/she think this is the case?

³ HR work alongside Business Managers to update structure charts, therefore BMs must contact the HR team to inform them of any structure changes. **Depending on the change SLT approval in advance may be required (e.g. for any grade increases, new posts or extensions to interim/FTC arrangements).** Current structure charts for review can be found on [Molly](#).

- What impact does he/she believe they have had on the team's performance as a whole? Was it positive or negative?
- What impact does he/she believe they have had on the organisation as a whole in meeting business objectives?

Looking Forward:

This section moves to future focus, aiming to discuss and agree the anticipated expectations for the individual over the next 12 months. Discussions should include reflections of the employee's role (Job Description and Person Specification). This allows you to clarify the expectations for completion of future tasks and objectives for the coming year, and ensure there is a common understanding of how this sits within the remit of the employee's role.

Where an employee believes they are working outside the remit of their role it is important to discuss this with them, fully understand if there is a true disparity or rather a different understanding of the boundaries or level of the objectives being set. Discuss the difference with the employee to agree tasks and objectives against the JD and PS requirements.

Tasks

Use this section to discuss and record goal orientated objectives (specific, challenging & achievable) as well as complex objectives/goals (realistic expectations, overall direction, what is achievable, "what good looks like"). You may need to discuss different types of objectives with different team members and it is likely that your discussion will very depend on the depth, breadth and complexity of the role. It is important to identify and recognise if this has changed over time, to discuss the reasons for this and to assess any likely changes to the skills requirements for the role as a consequence.

NB: A manager is responsible not only for their own individual performance but for the work and performance of those under their line management. His/her objectives will therefore include the work of the team(s) they manage. For BMT managers in particular it is realistic to expect that he/she will have a closer handle on objectives and challenges to achievement than an Executive Head could have given the BMT is responsible for their own service, including writing their own service plan and assessing overall team performance. Whatever the level, the PDR is the place for full and frank discussion to ensure perspectives are fully explained and understood and any performance or wellbeing issues considered.

Behaviours

Identify which behavioural skills will be most relevant to achieve and demonstrate 'success' of identified objectives, and how the employee may develop or use the skills they have learned in previous years to assist them in achieving new objectives and goals. Refer to MVDC values (and your own team's interpretation of them) to guide this discussion.

Identify any areas of "stretch" for the individual. These are objectives, tasks or behaviours that although challenging may allow the individual to develop skills and competencies that sit outside of the remit of their role. This provides the individual an opportunity to experience a sense of achievement and work towards higher goals (such as promotion to a management position). Discuss what development of such skills could provide to the organisation, as well as the individual.

Sample questions

Again the questions are provided to give ideas for a starting point and to aid a coaching conversation during the PDR discussion, ensuring that the employee's understanding of their role and the direction of future development are aligned to yours. By seeking the individual's views, differences of opinion can be more easily identified and discussed, reducing potential for problem areas later. Clarity of value of contribution and purpose will be critical to motivation and therefore productivity and wellbeing:

- What/which key tasks or activities do you envisage the employee being responsible for? Or contributing to?
- How does this fit into your service plan?
- How does it fit into the overall corporate strategy?
- What does the employee understand as the purpose of their role within MVDC?
- What does 'good' look like?
- What key behaviours are most relevant to this, and how can he/she express 'good'?
- Are these similar to skills already developed and demonstrated?
- Would it help the individual demonstrate success if he/she were to focus more on development of any particular aspects?

Wellbeing and Aspirations

This section is vital to enable you (and MVDC) to conduct workforce planning, reducing the need for enforced or sudden change (such as holding key vacancies that impact the whole team, restructuring or sudden changes in work demands).

Both internal (job related) and external (home related) factors affect an individual's work performance. This section therefore provides an opportunity to have a more rounded view which will allow you to consider providing support where needed. It is fine if the individual does not wish to discuss their home life, however this will prevent you as their manager being able to take personal circumstances into account if there are any performance concerns as you cannot afford to take rumor or speculation from colleagues or other members of the team at face value.

Wellbeing

Are there any points in relation to work, the working environment, morale, working relationships, equipment, etc. the employee would like to discuss?

Are there any other areas of change outside the individual's role that they would like to discuss? Can the organisation help the employee to prepare or could any of our other employment policies potentially be appropriate to assist? (E.g. relocation, retirement, reduction in hours, care for a dependent etc.?)

The individual may wish to discuss external factors that they feel could affect their ability either to carry out their current role as effectively as in previous years or that may reduce their ability to

develop and progress further within the organisation at this time. A fuller understanding of this will assist you in assessing capacity when agreeing your service plans.

Aspirations (Please note the PDR for Business Managers being trialed contains more comprehensive information for this aspect – please refer to the separate guidance).

What future plans does the employee have? This could be within their current role or it could be within the organisation as a whole, or potentially to move beyond the organisation.

Where internal change or progression is desired, consider and discuss with the individual their 'readiness' for this when a suitable opportunity arises. Reference should be made to both the individual's skills as well as their willingness to progress. We are a small organisation so you will need to manage an employee's expectations if they are ready and willing to progress. However overall it is better to take the opportunity to discuss this than potentially to leave an employee unaware of what may be holding them back, or unsure how they can redress a perceived shortfall.

From time to time, and when funding permits, there are opportunities for additional training and development (e.g. with the District Councils Network, the Local Government Association or Strategic Leadership courses). It is likely that agreement to support employees attending these courses will be contingent on SLT agreement. An individual wishing to increase their opportunity to be considered for development such as this should therefore request assessment of their potential to be considered so that discussion at SLT can be on an informed basis. Expenditure on development will only be justified where there is both an assessment of the benefits for the organization, strong performance in the current role and funds to support it.

NB Not all individuals are interested in change, or in progression, even when their capability is assessed as strong. It is crucial that this is understood when identifying potential future talent and that it does not impact assessment of current performance.

Sample questions to have in mind (though note this conversation in particular requires the need for the manager to think creatively and in response to issues raised at the time, so a comprehensive check list is not possible or desirable).

- Where does the individual see themselves in 12-18 months' time or beyond?
- Is anything stopping them getting there?
- Can the organisation do anything to support transition (where appropriate)?
- Is the individual looking for career progression in MVDC? (If so, discuss skill/will or performance and leadership potential - you may want to grid this according to the models at Appendix A)
- What qualities (skills or behaviours) do they believe they need to develop further?
- Is there anything that employee could do to demonstrate to you as their manager that they are ready to be considered for promotion when the opportunity arises (or to be given the additional support needed to reach that stage?)
- Can you see the individual in a more senior or alternative role in 12-18 months' time? If not, why not?

- If looking for lateral change across MVDC – is mentoring or shadowing appropriate?
- If looking to step down, retire, reduce hours, change roles, consider impact on wider team and business plan. **This will be crucial for the Resource Planning meeting with your Executive Head.**

NB: The PDR is not the appropriate place to formally agree or disagree any contractual changes. Consideration of contractual change request (e.g. flexible working, early retirement etc.) should be held as a separate discussion.

Development summary

What are the key areas identified for further learning or development?

Use this section to record any areas of performance where further training and support is required, as well as any areas where performance is particularly strong thus providing an opportunity to further develop these existing strengths in a way that meets organisational objectives as well as enhancing the employee's career satisfaction.

Unless you have a strong reason why this is inappropriate you should ensure that any line managers have completed appropriate management learning through appropriate induction or internal routes. eLearning, coaching and/or mentoring will usually be identified as initial learning priorities with more advanced management development identified as their skills and knowledge progress. Enhanced learning may be provided through apprenticeships and other development routes where appropriate.

Consider and discuss any options that may be appropriate if the opportunity arises. Development is not restricted to 'training courses' and may include secondments, projects, coaching, planned experience or any other activity that could enhance skills, knowledge and behaviours.

Remember: If the individual is happy in their current role and does not wish to have any further training or development, the manager must always assess whether there are any development requirements to support the changing needs of the organisation.

An Action Plan should be completed to record identified development and/or learning after the Performance and Development Review meeting. The forms for this are contained in the PDR post meeting form. Any development that you believe is needed and has an attached cost must be documented for learning needs analysis and consideration by the relevant BMT or Executive Head/SLT for approval before booking.

Sample questions

- Has the individual completed the learning required for their current role (including any mandatory learning)?
- What are the ongoing learning and/or development needs for the role (i.e. to keep up to date?)
- What further development have you identified as appropriate for the role?
- Is there any learning and development that the individual is particularly requesting for the current role?

Mandatory learning for current year

Current mandatory e-learning [can be accessed here](#)

These modules need to be completed every year by all employees.

Additional learning for new starters is referred to in the [probation guidance](#) and in the Learning Development pages on [My HR](#).

It is advisable that managers review any completed learning in preparation for the PDR and to ensure mandatory learning has been completed as a minimum. Guidance for managers [can be viewed here](#) (on the L&D pages of MyHR).

There is regular customer care learning for all new employees and all managers are required to undertake appropriate management development. (Management learning is specifically reported on through the workforce planning process).

Other mandatory learning is rolled out from time to time.

Overall assessment of performance

Provide a conclusion on the individual's performance based on your conversation and recorded information. The length should be appropriate to the circumstances. You should include reference to both tasks and behaviours of the discussion.

You should make your conclusion clear (even if the context is complicated) so that the employee can understand how you think they are doing – e.g. strong, fair, and weak.

You should provide an assessment of any main areas of context that you consider to be highly relevant. This is also the place to bring in any additional feedback you have had (e.g. 360).

Make sure any shortfalls are backed up with a development plan (and performance monitoring where required). (Any serious shortfalls requiring performance monitoring should have been discussed prior to the PDR).

Your conclusion can also include a summary of the individual's readiness for progression including both the 'skill' and 'will' of the individual to progress and any identified development need to assist them.

Overall performance including the above elements will be provided to each BM/Exec Head as appropriate as part of the annual Resource Planning meeting. (This is an overall team discussion and review to ensure effective service planning).

Final notes: Performance and development needs must be reviewed on an ongoing basis through regular one to ones, and, in cases where there are problems, through specific interventions using employment policies and procedures and with advice from the HR team as necessary.

Amongst other things, the PDR is a critical management tool providing management information for a Resource Planning meeting with each Executive Head to discuss and assess overall team performance and succession planning.

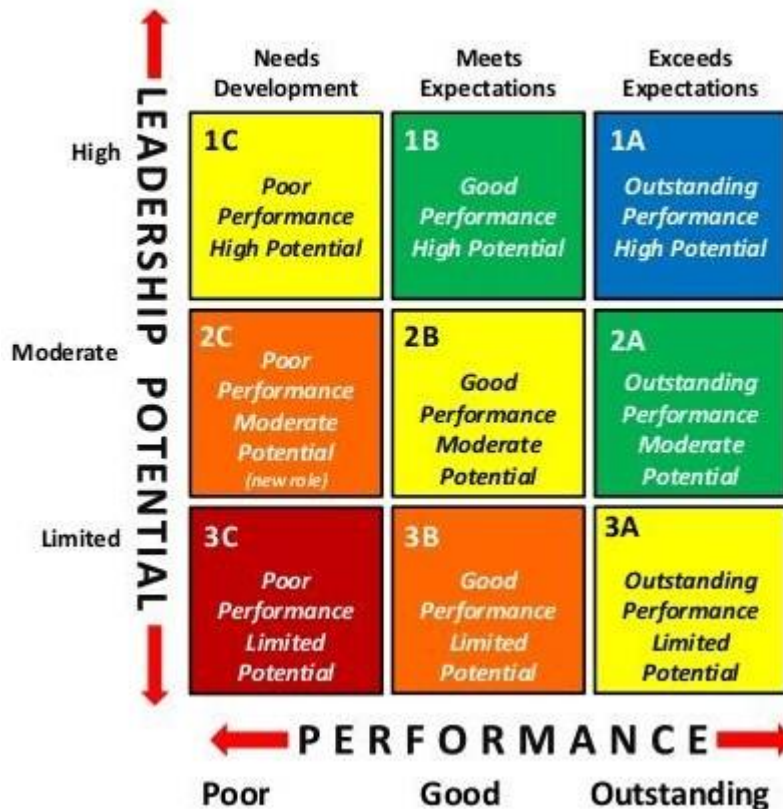
One copy of the completed PDR form should be kept by the manager and one by the employee. The PDR form must then be saved on the employee record of i-trent – [instructions how to do this here](#).

Completion of the PDR process must then be recorded on i-trent as a 'learning event' – for details of how to do this see MyHR. (NB Completion rates will be proactively monitored).

Appendix A – Performance and leadership potential

The following grid can be a useful aid to discussion. If they are already exceeding expectations they can be considered as priority for additional development programmes. If relevant focus the discussion on areas for development that will assist the employee to reach their potential.

9 Box Performance-Potential Matrix



Performance - technical skills, abilities, and subject matter knowledge in job related field; ability to develop and maintain working relationships which incorporate DOHR's values.

Potential - the ability or capacity for growth and development into a leadership role.

Leader - one who guides, directs, influences, and shows the way to others.



Skill/will for progression

This can be useful if you are assessing whether or not an employee wishes to progress within the organisation, remembering that good performance in current role is a thing to be celebrated and praised for its own sake. Not all employees wish to aim for promotion – many will derive satisfaction and add significant value at the levels they are currently working to.

A leader or learner will only develop a skill if they have the will

Will = desire, hunger, drive, ambition, willingness, your reason for being, mindset

Skill = ability, competence, capability, something you are known for, niche, skillset

	High	LW 4 HS	MW 7 HS	HW 9 HS
Skill	Medium	LW 2 MS	MW 6 MS	HW 8 MS
	Low	LW 1 LS	MW 3 LS	HW 5 LS
		Low	Medium	High

Will

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A leader or learner with high-will is likely to gain more success over a person with high-skill alone.

Your task is: inch towards high-will and high-skill, one brick at a time.