



LET'S

TALK

A Positive Conversation



1

What are Positive Conversations?

Positive Conversations are about managers and their employee(s) having regular discussions which are focused on work related goals for the year ahead, providing feedback, agreeing support and identifying development needs for individuals and teams. The approach to these conversations is that it's all about the employee having the opportunity to talk about their job. The process is designed to be flexible to suit the needs of different teams and employees, and to fit into practices already present in services without adding to workload, such as supervisions and regular conversations or team meetings.

What is the purpose of Positive Conversations?

The purpose is to enable meaningful conversations between managers and their employees to support relationship building, motivation, engagement and the creation of value for individuals. The goal of the conversations is to boost confidence and morale, whilst producing high performing individuals and teams. For managers to achieve high performing teams they must consider their individuals, tasks and the team as a whole. It is important to utilise conversations to support workforce and succession planning activity.

Any performance issues should be dealt with appropriately, using the Managing Poor Performance guidance.

2



3

What do Positive Conversations look like?

They are a relaxed but focused conversation between managers and their employee or team. They should be used to discuss performance and progress, and how can they be the best at work.

The 3 stages of conversations are:

Individual Annual Conversations

Regular 1-2-1 Check-in

Team Check-in



Individual Annual Conversations

Every employee will be invited to attend an annual conversation with their manager, which will be centred around 3 discussion areas. This is an opportunity for reflecting and taking a look over what has been accomplished and what will be centred in the year ahead. It is not about completing a form, but instead having a valuable conversation which will be centred around the employee, their role and their goals. This is mandatory for all employees and should be completed on an annual basis.



The 3 areas are:

What has gone well over the last year?

What might have gone even better?

What do you want to achieve in the year(s) ahead?

Supporting questions for annual conversations

The below is a list of supplementary questions which can be used to aid conversations and help managers and employees get the most out of the discussion, these can be adapted to suit the individual and job role:

What has gone well over the last year?	What might have gone better?	What do you want to achieve in the year(s) ahead?
What do you feel the proudest of in the last 12 months?	What has been challenging or had you out of your comfort zone?	What do you think your objectives should be? How do you plan on achieving these?
What have you enjoyed working on most?	What have you learned from this experience?	What barriers or challenges might get in the way? How do you think these can be overcome?
What sense of achievement did you gain this last year?	What support could have helped you achieve your goals easier?	How can I help? What support do you need?
Did you feel recognised for your achievement(s)?		How are you hoping to develop in the next 12 months? Where do you see yourself/career in the future?



Template for Individual Annual Conversations

Employee Name		Employee Number	
Job Title		Date	

RECORD BRIEF BULLET POINTS – GOALS CAN BE SHORT AND LONG TERM

What has gone well this year? (Achievements)	What might have gone even better this year? (Challenges)
Commitments (What do you want to achieve and focus on in the future?)	
Objectives	Development
Manager Signature	Employee Signature

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Regular 1-2-1 Check-ins

In addition to the annual conversation, it is best practice that managers carry out regular 1-2-1 check-in conversations with their employees throughout the year, however this is optional. Check-ins should cover specific topic areas, as identified below. Research shows that regular, valuable conversations between managers and employees leads to improved performance, motivation and productivity within teams.

The conversations can be easily incorporated into scheduled supervision and meetings, or simply be a standalone protected time to catch up. The frequency and topics to be discussed are entirely flexible and can change based on the needs of the individual or what the manager and employee want to focus on - they can also vary from one check-in to another. It would be good practice for managers to hold more regular check-ins with employees they don't often see eg Hybrid Workers.



Life and Wellbeing

This topic focusses on the employee's health and wellbeing. It should cover areas such as resilience and dealing with change. Through the conversation any support the manager can provide in the workplace should be identified.



Personal Development

This should cover any development that was planned and any future needs that have been identified, this can be from the annual conversation or points raised in previous check-in.



Objectives and Performance

Review of objectives and performance goals agreed at the beginning of the year. This is important to regularly discuss throughout the year to ensure that progress is being made and actions can be taken.



Improvements

The focus of this topic is on what the employee thinks about improvements that can be made within the team or service. Is there a new way of working that could support service delivery?



Feedback

The conversations within this process should be focusing on the employee's strengths and building on these. The manager should start the conversations by asking the employee what they believe their strengths are and then present their views on the employee's strengths. If there are areas of concern with the employee's performance feedback should be given and if required, the 6 steps included in the Managing Poor Performance Guidelines should be implemented. Where performance is an issue more regular meetings would be beneficial.



Council's Vision and Priorities

This topic focusses on the employee's health and wellbeing. It should cover areas such as resilience and dealing with change. Through the conversation any support the manager can provide in the workplace should be identified.

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Supporting questions for regular 1-2-1 check-in conversations

The below is a list of supplementary questions which can be used to aid conversations and help managers and employees get the most out of the discussion, these can be adapted to suit the individual and job role:



Life and Wellbeing

How do you feel about your work and work-life balance?

What worries or concerns do you have? How can we support your wellbeing?

How resilient do you feel at present?

What impact is hybrid working having on your wellbeing?



Personal Development

Have you organised or completed any of your agreed development needs?

What did you find most useful?

What might be an area of development that will help you further in your job?

What support would help you achieve your development needs?



Objectives and Performance

How are you progressing with your objectives?

Are any of your objectives causing you concern or might not be met? How could you overcome this?

Which objectives are you able to progress the best?

What support do you need to meet your objectives?



Improvements

What, if any, improvements to your job have you identified since our last meeting?

What impact would the suggested improvements make?

What organisational/ or service improvements would you like to see?

How successfully do you think the improvement could be implemented?



Feedback

What has been your biggest achievement so far this year?

What feedback would you like to give me?

What has been your biggest challenge so far this year?

What other feedback would you like/want to discuss?



Council's Vision and Priorities







How well do you think your role supports Council objectives?

What can I do to support you model the values/ objectives?



Optional Template for Regular 1-2-1 Check-in Forms

OPTIONAL – MANAGERS MAY WISH TO USE THEIR OWN OR EXISTING RECORDING PROCESS

Employee Name:		Employee Number:	
Job Title:		Date:	
 Life and Wellbeing			
 Personal Development			
 Objectives and Performance			
 Improvements			
 Feedback			
 Council's vision and priorities			

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Team Check In

Managers should allow time for check-ins with their team which are focused on the team working well together. The frequency of team check-ins will vary across the Council; however it is recommended that a minimum of 2 check-ins per year should be completed. The below topics are suggested areas that can be the focus of team check-in conversations. Many teams will have regular team meetings, which managers should continue to have, however, throughout the year it is important that time is dedicated to discussing certain topics as identified below. Team check-in's aim to support succession planning activities and improve team adaptability.

1

Council Vision, Values and Priorities

This allows a conversation to take place about what is happening across the Council and within your Service regarding Council of the Future projects and workstreams.

2

Employee Engagement

Every 3 years employees will participate in an engagement survey and this conversation allows managers to communicate with the findings from the survey.

3

Celebrating Achievements

This is an opportunity to celebrate what the team are doing well, where they have gone the extra mile and reflect on the impact the team has had – any projects achieved etc.

4

Current Performance

This is an opportunity for the team to review their performance and achievements against action plans and targets. Or take time to establish new goals and actions for the team.

5

Challenges and Ideas

An open forum for the team to discuss challenges they are facing as a team/with work. A chance to explore and try solutions and find ways to support each other and work collaboratively.

6

Team Learning

This focusses on empowering the team to share knowledge and experiences; from training events, articles found, new tasks or from trying something new.



Optional Template for Team Check-in

OPTIONAL – MANAGERS MAY WISH TO USE THEIR OWN OR EXISTING RECORDING PROCESS

Date of meeting:		
Updates from previous meeting:		
Topic of Conversation	Key Discussion	Actions



Our Council Values

Employees at Inverclyde play a vital role in the Council delivering the values. The values are listed here and should be used to support the positive conversations between managers and employees.

Understanding how your role, no matter what grade, plays a part in ensuring that Inverclyde performs to its highest potential, keeping employees engaged and committed to performing, whilst achieving personal development.



We are nurturing

we care, we deliver our work in a supportive way



We are inclusive

we challenge inequalities and ensure that all our citizens can access services



We are focused on wellbeing

we support good health and wellbeing for our citizens and employees



We support empowerment

we believe we can produce better results through collaboration with communities



We are focused on achieving

we are positive and ambitious for everyone who lives in Inverclyde



We are respectful and responsible

we deliver our work with honesty and integrity, we listen



We provide a safe environment

we work with partners to ensure Inverclyde is a safe place to work and live



The Council Plan 2023-28

The Council Plan 2023 – 2028 is the key strategic plan for the Council. It sets out what we want to achieve and covers all Council Services. Our vision is *'Success for All – Getting it right for every child, citizen and community'*.

The full plan can be viewed using this link:

<https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/strategies-policies-and-plans/council-plan>

THEME 1: PEOPLE

Outcomes we will achieve:

- Our young people have the best start in life through high quality support and education.
- Gaps in outcomes linked to poverty are reduced.
- People are supported to improve their health and wellbeing.
- More people will be in employment, with fair pay and conditions.
- Our most vulnerable families and residents are safeguarded and supported.



THEME 2: PLACE

Outcomes we will achieve:

- Communities are thriving, growing and sustainable.
- Our strategic housing function is robust.
- Our economy and skills base are developed.
- We have a sufficient supply of business premises.
- Our natural environment is protected.



THEME 3: PERFORMANCE

Outcomes we will achieve:

- High quality and innovative services are provided, giving value for money.
- Our employees are supported and developed.





Process for Positive Conversations

