

# Performance Appraisals: An Overview



# Valuing Employees and Their Contribution

Inverclyde is focused on having and developing a workforce which is skilled and driven to deliver excellent services, as well as being satisfied at work. This can be partly achieved by working with employees to ensure that their performance is recognised, rewarded and developed over time.

The Performance Appraisal Scheme is part of a wider plan to ensure this happens. It is an opportunity for you and your manager to consider how you carry out your work against agreed core competencies. These core competences reflect current and future Council objectives and will help identify what employees do well, and what areas of their work may benefit from development.

Without doubt, employees are the greatest asset in the Council, and we recognise that time should be dedicated to ensuring that your skills remain suitable for the organisations' changing needs. The agreed competencies reflect the future direction of the Council and full commitment is given to support employees in working towards being fully competent in each one.

# Performance Appraisals at Inverclyde

Every employee has an important role to play in helping the Council to achieve its corporate aims, objectives and outcomes which are outlined in the Corporate Statement and Single Outcome Agreement.

It is important that Performance Appraisals are used to show the contribution employees are making towards the achievement of the Council's corporate objectives. This helps all employees know how they are helping to make Inverclyde a better place to live and work, and Inverclyde Council a better organisation. Employees and managers alike should ensure a sound understanding of the key visions, aims and objectives of the Council and consider how their contribution adds to these.

The Performance Appraisal Scheme is two-way, with both employees and their managers completing the same paperwork and contributing equally.

# Performance Appraisals and Council's Vision and Objectives

It is important that Performance Appraisals show the contribution that employees are making to the achievement of the Council's corporate objectives, outlined in the Corporate Statement and the Single Outcome Agreement, so that all employees know how they are helping to making Inverclyde a better place to live and work, and Inverclyde Council a better organisation.

The Council and the Community Planning Partnership (Inverclyde Alliance) have agreed the vision for Inverclyde, which is:

**Getting it Right for Every Child, Citizen and Community**

This is underpinned by a series of wellbeing outcomes which we aim to achieve. We want all our children, citizens and communities to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.

The **Single Outcome Agreement** (SOA) sets out the context in which additional, more place based, local outcomes have been developed, identifying the priorities and issues which affect the lives of the people of Inverclyde. The outcomes, when achieved, will improve the quality of life and the wellbeing of the people who live here, whilst tackling the inequalities which exist across the area.

To deliver the vision, the Inverclyde Alliance, has agreed, with its communities, a number of strategic local outcomes set out in the SOA:

- Inverclyde's population is stable with a good balance of socio-economic groups.
- Communities are stronger, responsible and more able to identify, articulate and take action on their needs and aspirations to bring about an improvement in the quality of community life.
- The area's economic regeneration is secured, economic activity in Inverclyde is increased, and skills development enables both those in work and those furthest from the labour market to realise their full potential.
- The health of local people is improved, combating health inequality and promoting healthy lifestyles.
- A positive culture change will have taken place in Inverclyde in attitudes to alcohol, resulting in fewer associated health problems, social problems and reduced crime rates.
- A nurturing Inverclyde gives all our children and young people the best possible start in life.
- Inverclyde is a place where people want to live now whilst at the same time safeguarding the environment for future generations.
- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

The Corporate Statement adopts the SOA and wellbeing outcomes for the Council and show how the Council will focus on making Inverclyde a place which nurtures all its citizens,

ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to have a good quality of life and good mental and physical wellbeing. Nurture is about growth and development both emotionally and economically.

Performance Appraisals seek to ensure that employees are aware of the Council's Corporate Vision and the outcomes which the Council is aiming to achieve for all its children, citizens and communities.

## Scope of the Scheme

The scheme is applicable at this stage to all Local Government Employees, but not to those on teachers' conditions or Chief Officers who have their own nationally agreed personal development schemes and existing processes respectively.

The scheme is designed to be easy to use, whilst still being meaningful and robust in establishing the desired values and helping employees achieve their full potential.

# Core Competencies

## **What are they and why have them?**

Core Competencies are behaviours which it is hoped will contribute to the Councils' overall success. They will encourage a positive and a high standard of performance among employees in a more structured fashion than is currently in place. They will also act as a method for highlighting development needs either on an individual or organisational basis.

The competencies have been agreed due to their reflection of the Councils overall long-term objectives. The focus of the scheme is qualitative based, focusing on how employees demonstrate the agreed behaviours throughout the course of their work, using examples and considering any development needs for the future.

As well as considering the performance of existing employees against the core competencies, they will also be introduced gradually into the Councils corporate recruitment and selection process. This will ensure that from day one, prospective, new employees are engaged with the Councils objectives and demonstrate the desired competencies to be able to help the Council succeed.

# Competency Based Performance Appraisals

There are many advantages of introducing a competency based approach:

- Encouraging the corporate values and objectives across all levels of employees.
- Consistency in what employees performance is considered against.
- Being able to integrate the core-competencies into other areas consistently (e.g. recruitment/ performance management).
- Managing expectations of existing, new and prospective new employees.
- Presenting the Councils values and culture to the wider world.
- Employee retention and attraction based on desired competencies.

The competency-model approach comes with a general questionnaire and job specific considerations which will allow both managers and employees to consider specifics of their day to day performance in general terms, as well as against the agreed core competencies. Learning and development needs also play an important role in the overall process.



# Inverclydes' Core Competencies and Definitions

## **Adaptable to Change & Innovative**

Understands and responds well to the need for change, either operational, organisational or task related. Is forthcoming with suggestions as to how changes can be made to improve the organisation/operation/task. Is aware of the importance of bringing forward new ideas.

## **Effective Communicator**

Communicates excellently with all stakeholders and is accessible, helpful and professional whilst carrying out duties.

## **Customer/Client Focused**

Carries out their duties with due consideration to all relevant parties and is aware of the importance of representing the Council well both internally and externally.

## **Self Aware Team Player**

Is aware of the impact and influence of actions and behaviours on others and is able to work well in teams.

## **Local Government Awareness**

Has a sound understanding of the services that the Council delivers, as well as the challenges and opportunities within it. Has an understanding of the local and national contexts in which the Council operates.

### **Motivated & Productive**

Demonstrates a positive approach to work and is a good representative of the Council. Delivers excellent outputs and uses time effectively to the value of the Council.

### **Job Specific/Technical/Professional Expertise**

Performs well in the key deliverables of the post held, taking into account job specific requirements.

### **Excellent People Manager** *(Management Positions Only)*

Delivers results through the people that they manage.

### **Delivers Results** *(Management Positions Only)*

Is extremely effective at delivering and improving Services.

### **Excellent Financial Manager** *(Management Positions Only)*

Ensures accurate and efficient management of financial resources.

# Grade Allocation

Each competency is considered against a Grade Allocation from 1 - 4.

An overall grade of 1 - 4 will also be agreed.

## Definition of Grade Allocations

### Grade 1

- Demonstrates performance far in excess of expectations of the post.
- Delivers outstanding standards in both quality of work and adding value to the team/service.
- Performs consistently to the highest standard to no development needs to be fully competent in post.

### Grade 2

- High quality performance, exceeding the basic requirements of the post.
- A very good overall standard of delivery.
- Frequently performs to the highest standard with minimum development needs to be full competent in post.

### Grade 3

- Performance meets the acceptable standards required for the post.
- A good overall standard of delivery.
- Generally a good performance with some development needs to be fully competent in post.

### Grade 4

- Performance falls below the requirements for the post.
- Delivery is below acceptable standards.
- Has several areas of improvement/development needs to be fully competent in post.

# Preparing for the Appraisal

Being prepared is vital to the success of the scheme. Managers know in advance how many appraisals they are required to carry out, and employees know that they will have at least one annual appraisal. Leaving the documenting of performance matters until the last minute may reduce the value of the appraisal for both parties. The key is to stay as up-to-date as possible with performance matters - this applies to both employee and manager. You should complete your paperwork before the meeting.

If neither party has adequately prepared for the appraisal meeting, there is likelihood that the meeting will become one-way, thus preparation is extremely important for both parties.

# The Paperwork

Templates are available which both the employee and manager should complete ahead of the appraisal meeting (see section headed “Preparing for the Appraisal” on page 14).

## **There are four key documents which relate to Performance Appraisal:**

- Template for Employees Grade K and above
- Template for Employees Graded H - J
- Template for Employees Graded A - G
- Overall Guidance/Definitions of Grade Allocations.

Templates are available on ICON and via Organisational Development.

Each template is supported by an opportunity to agree a Personal Development Plan or a Performance Improvement Plan.

The reason for the different templates is to reflect the different manager to employee ratios across the Council, the numerous posts covered by the scheme, and the amount of feedback which will practically be available from both parties.

The documents get gradually shorter, those in the K and above category having the longest document. This is to account for posts which are more heavily populated than others to still be

included in the scheme, whilst being realistic about the amount of information that may be available and valuable to both managers and employees regarding their performance. For example a Cluster Officer in Facilities may have 30 Facilities Assistants (Cleaning) to consider, whilst a Team Leader in Planning may have three Planners to consider, so the paperwork has been designed to allow each group to be considered against the core competencies whilst still allowing the scheme to be applied practically.

Please ensure you become familiar with the paperwork that is relevant to you.

## The Appraisal Meeting Itself - An Overview

The meeting itself should be a two-way discussion with the objective of mutually agreeing on both performance and development needs.

It is recommended that normally between 20 minutes to an hour should be spent on each appraisal meeting, depending on your post. The meeting should take place in a private meeting area/room where both parties can talk openly and freely without fear of interruption. Managers should ensure the meeting cannot be disturbed, other than in extremely exceptional circumstances.

Each party should complete the templates in advance, and come to the meeting ready to discuss their comments. If there is a miss-match between how the employee and manager has graded a particular competency, meaningful discussion should take place to explain the reasons for their grade allocation, with a view to reaching an agreement.

Employees should feel relaxed enough to discuss their own impressions of their own performance, and managers should be confident in discussing their assessment of the employee. If either party has any concerns about their own abilities to take part in the meeting, they should ensure that these are raised at the earliest possible opportunity with senior managers, so that training/development interventions can be put in place to assist.

At the meeting, both parties should discuss their previously completed templates in which ever fashion they agree will be most effective. For example, they may choose go through one section at a time and discuss any differences in opinion at the end of each section, or to go through the entire document one person at a time and take notes for discussion at the end, whatever works best for those involved.

A Training and Development Plan or Performance Improvement Plan should be agreed within the meeting, again after meaningful discussion has taken place.



## Who Conducts the Appraisal?

As a general rule, line managers review their staff members as they will know the job well and will have a good understanding of day to day operations. For example, Heads of Service will conduct appraisals for Service Managers, Service Managers for Team Leaders, and Team Leaders for Officers etc.

There will inevitably be some more complex structures throughout the Council, which should be approached in a pragmatic way. Whoever has general day to day responsibility for overseeing an employee should take responsibility for their appraisal. If this happens to be more than one manager, all relevant parties should contribute, but at least one should agree responsibility for ensuring feedback is collated and that the meeting takes place. If required, Organisational Development can advise on the best way forward in these circumstances to ensure the overall objectives of the scheme are met.

Remember you play an important role in helping us achieve our corporate aims and objectives and your Performance Appraisal shows the contribution you make towards these.

Thank you for your continued efforts to make Inverclyde a safe, inclusive and prosperous place to live and work.

# Quick-View of the Process

Every employee covered by the scheme will have an annual appraisal in anniversary of service month or at date decided by Head of Service.



Organisational Development will provide service updates of appraisals due.



Managers to provide employees with reasonable notice of appraisal meeting (two weeks if possible).



Managers and employees to spend time individually preparing for meeting. Both complete the same paperwork.



Meeting to take place privately and uninterrupted, and be based on two-way discussion around performance.



Learning and development needs to be identified and agreed, and personal development plan to be completed.



Employees graded 4 or bordering to agree a Performance Improvement Plan with their managers and this should be monitored over an agreed timescale.



Services to report grades to Organisational Development.



Services and individuals to retain hard copy and electronic copy of appraisal documentation locally (and securely).



Employees and managers ensure development needs are supported and met within agreed timescale.



## Get in touch

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