



Performance Appraisal Guidelines for Managers

Make the most of a
Performance Appraisal Meeting

Inverclyde
council

Introduction

Performance appraisal is now well established across the Council, having been introduced in 2010. The latest position presented - for financial year 2015/2016 - 91% of employees benefited from Performance Appraisal. The target is 90% for 2016/2017.

It is important that each appraiser maintains a full understanding of the benefits of performance appraisal and continues to support and promote the importance of the overall appraisal process, otherwise focus can diminish over time.

Do you get the most out of performance appraisal meetings?

This guide is designed to help you make the most of appraisal's by focusing attention on common complaints and then advising you how to avoid such challenges in the first place.

No-one comes out of them any the wiser

Separating the appraisal meeting into three distinct parts, gives the meeting a structure and a clear demonstration of what an appraisal is all about.

Before the meeting;

- Take time to prepare
- Schedule time out
- Issue employee document in advance
- Arrange a suitable venue.

Part 1

Set the Scene - remind the employee of the purpose and importance of their role and it's place in the Service and the wider Council. Share examples of service and corporate achievements.

Ensure through two way discussion that the employee feels supported and properly equipped to give their best - encourage discussion and note any negative feedback taking necessary action to address via HR if required.

Part 2

The Appraisal - before going over the competencies take the time to point out that an appraisal process benefits all concerned and is a time to reflect on past performance and to develop and agree new objectives and development needs.

Always look ahead with optimism - appraisal is not the time to focus on negative matters which should always be addressed as they occur and not stored up for this annual meeting.

Part 3

Training and Development - don't forget this part which like the rest of the process is a two way discussion leading to training and development opportunities which it is recognised we all need.

Getting this part right will improve performance and service delivery over time and year on year. In order to further develop this part services are encouraged to discuss their top five training and development requests with OD & HR. This will go some way to ensure training and development is linked to employee aspirations and management goals and objectives. Managers should discuss the Council's training matrix and corporate training plan routinely with employees.

After the meeting;

- Ensure both yourself and the employee are satisfied with the outcome
- Sign the relevant documentation and keep a copy
- Ensure that your grades are recorded and returned to HR
- Take responsibility for encouraging and supporting training and development
- Communicate regularly, the annual appraisal is an accumulation of regular and ongoing discussions.

Too much focus on outputs

Appraisal can focus too much on the extent to which someone has met pre designated objectives without thinking enough about the skills and personal attributes we need from our employees.

This can give a slightly skewed focus on performance - like the employee who meets targets however, is always late in the morning or not much of a team player. Therefore consider outputs, however, don't forget other aspects which are equally important. Each competency is valuable on it's own merit and all competencies are connected.

Employees feel disengaged

At their worst, appraisals can end up being less about employees and their work and more about appraisers dictating. Employees should leave an appraisal energised and with new impetus not questioning the very purpose of the process. Two way respectful discussion will achieve this aim. Also point out that we are all appraised and all have responsibilities which we are accountable for so nobody is being singled out - in fact appraisals help us all to get the most out of work that we can. Surely most of us welcome knowing how we're doing and how we can develop.

Objectives are not clearly defined

Having taken the time to sit down with a colleague and undertake the appraisal and; bearing in mind each and every one of us can improve, then it surely follows that actions should be established for the future. Out of every appraisal should come a minimum

of two actions (training and development) that must be completed which are designed to lead to improved performance.

There's never any praise

It is important to celebrate success and to think about how an employee can build on their strengths. Don't wait for the annual appraisal meeting to praise - the appraisal meeting is part

of a continuous process of regular contact with employee's.

The appraisal should always be positive with a focus on looking ahead. Note this approach is also true for poor performers - the appraisal meeting should be used to encourage improvement not

to dwell on problems which are best approached elsewhere.

Advice on best practice is available from colleagues in OD & HR.

Frequently asked questions

Q Is meeting once a year enough?

A This is only the formal meeting. Appraisal does not replace the normal daily communication between colleagues which naturally takes place. Nothing at the appraisal meeting should be new other than perhaps future development. Good news or bad news should never be stored away ready to bring out at an appraisal meeting. Performance related discussions should take place as and when required as part of a continuous process.

Q How do you avoid a 'them and us' perception of appraisal?

A Wholly down to the approach of the appraiser. Setting the scene is vital as described above, as is ensuring development, and looking ahead, all of which should be afforded as much of a focus as the appraisal. Take the opportunity to remind the appraisee that we are all subject to appraisal in some shape or form and that a completely open approach is the best way.

Q Is the time invested in appraisals worth it?

A Yes, if you remind yourself that managers alongside HR are responsible for encouraging employees to give their best each and every day then an appraisal will be seen as a vital component to get right. Appraisal is consistent throughout the year with the appraisal meeting acting as a general focal point only, a further reason for us all to provide a good level of effort.

Q Why is appraisal not 360 degree?

A This approach is being developed however, in the meantime appraisers are encouraged to encourage appraisee's to pass comments as part of the two way discussion.

Q Who should do most of the talking?

A Communication is key to a successful performance appraisal.

You want each employee to be fully motivated at the end of the meeting. Therefore, encourage dialogue and include personal ambitions, ideas for improvement and a view on the performance appraisal process.

Get in touch

Phone: 01475 712740

Email: human.resources@inverclyde.gov.uk

Write to: Organisational Development,
Human Resources & Communications
Inverclyde Council
Municipal Buildings
Greenock
Inverclyde PA15 1LX

www.inverclyde.gov.uk