

Performance Development Review procedures

Introduction

1. The Performance Development Review (PDR) process enables jobholders and line managers to review performance in a structured format. Whilst formally there are two meetings during the review year, jobholders and line managers should regularly meet and communicate throughout the year to ensure there is an effective working relationship. All staff are encouraged to use the PDR process to prompt reflection on their performance, to learn from it and to seek ways of developing and improving.
2. The interim and final review stages should not hold any surprises as issues should be raised and resolved throughout the year. The on-line application which supports this process is designed predominantly as a means of recording formally the outcomes of the conversations between jobholders and their line managers: it is not intended to replace or constrain the range of conversations and other exchanges which arise as a normal part of a line management relationship.

Purpose of performance management

3. The purpose of performance management is to assist in:
 - communicating to jobholders what is expected of them and how their work contributes to the objectives of the organisation;
 - providing feedback, and encouraging reflection, on performance (key activities, values and behaviours and objectives);
 - promoting and evaluating learning and development;
 - managing poor performance; and
 - linking performance to the Pay policy.

Diversity and equal opportunity

4. Under the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful to discriminate against an individual because of a protected characteristic; it is important to note that making assumptions or stereotyping can be discriminatory, and can result in unfavourable treatment.
5. Where an individual has any specific requirements or reasonable adjustments, these will be taken into account in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Training and support

6. Should a line manager require any support or training on performance management, they should speak to their own line manager and contact HR.
7. All new staff at induction stage will be taken through the PDR process.
8. If countersigning officers, line managers or jobholders are unclear about any aspect of the PDR process they should contact HR for guidance.

System functions

9. The line manager will have access to change the PDR throughout the year. Jobholders will be able to amend objectives and training needs throughout the year.

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If either makes changes to the PDR, the agreement process will need to be completed.

10. Automatic emails will be generated via the system at each stage of the process.

Stages in the performance year

11. The performance year runs from 1 April to 31 March.
12. The performance plan should be agreed by the end of April, setting objectives for the year.
13. Interim reviews will take place in October, reviewing the first six months of the performance year.
14. The final review will take place in March, reviewing the full 12 months and covering Key Activities, Values and Behaviours and Objectives. The completed PDR should be submitted and agreed by the end of March.
15. Line managers should allow time to gather sources of third party feedback and all staff will be contacted with an opportunity to provide feedback on their line managers and countersigning officers (full details of this process are outlined below).
16. Where Exceptional or Improvement Required ratings are being considered, a rationale of the intention to award either of these ratings should be shared with the Chief Executive by the end of the second week in March. The Chief Executive will provide comments and the line manager will then be able to meet with the jobholder.
17. It is important throughout this process to keep to the deadlines set. This will ensure that jobholders are clear on their plans for the year and will not delay the delivery of training. Late submissions also impact on payment of increments.
18. To ensure deadlines are met the electronic system will issue automatic reminders at each stage of the process. If there are extenuating circumstances that might result in late submission please inform HR as soon as possible.
19. Once all reviews have been submitted, HR will issue a statistical report to Management Board detailing the ratings issues across the organisation. This overall summary of ratings for the organisation will be issued to all staff (this will not include any breakdown by team to ensure anonymity). The previous years results will also be included for comparison.

Setting the performance plan

20. The line manager is responsible for setting the performance plan on the electronic system. The jobholder has access to the system to change objectives and training needs before anything is agreed. The performance plan should be set and approved by all parties by 30 April.
21. The line manager and the jobholder should meet to discuss the performance plan, including objectives and any training needs the jobholder may need for the coming

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year. This may involve reflecting back on the previous year to identify any areas that require improvement or areas that a jobholder wishes to develop.

22. Once discussed the line manager must update the performance plan on the system. It is recommended that a draft version is shared by clicking the link, however this is not mandatory. The jobholder can check the draft for accuracy.
23. The line manager should then agree the plan to begin the approvals process.
24. The countersigning officer must then check the plan and also agree. If there are any concerns these should be discussed with the line manager.
25. Once agreed by the line manager and the countersigning officer, the jobholder must approve the final plan. Details of the plan at this stage should not be a surprise and should have already been discussed with the jobholder.
26. The job description for the jobholder will be available as a PDF link on the performance plan. These will be held centrally by HR to manage the process of changing job descriptions.

Setting objectives

27. Objectives should be written in line with the SMART criteria:
 - **Specific** Clearly outlines the task
 - **Measurable** Progress can be measured against the task
 - **Achievable** Challenging but possible to complete
 - **Relevant** Appropriate for the jobholder to complete in line with their role
 - **Time Bound** Set with reasonable timescales e.g. within 1/ 3/ 6/ 12 months
28. Objectives should be set jointly. Jobholders should have input into the writing of the objectives, providing suggestions for tasks or providing amendments to what has been written. If a line manager feels it is appropriate they can task the jobholder with writing the first draft of the objectives, however the ultimate responsibility lies with the line manager.
29. When setting objectives the aims of the Corporate Strategy and Operational Plan should be considered. If it is likely that the setting of objectives will be delayed, it is advised that interim objectives are set via the PDR until the Corporate Strategy and Operational Plan are agreed. The system is designed to allow for objectives to be changed at any time during the performance year.
30. Where a jobholder's key activities reflect their objectives, the key activities from the job description can be used as objectives. These should be written in the SMART format and not directly copied from the job description.
31. For new jobholders, objectives should be proportionate and take into account the amount of time remaining in the performance year and the level of their experience. This would be applicable to both new promotees and new employees who are within their probation period (please refer to the Probation procedures for full details).

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Setting training requirements

32. During the performance plan discussion, the line manager and jobholder should establish what training requirements are needed for the year. The PDR should clearly state the objectives of the proposed training.
33. HR will access the training requirements and make arrangements for jobholders to complete this training. HR will complete the booking process via the PDR system and automatic reminders will be sent to jobholders and line managers. The booking process will link to the evaluation form once the training has been completed.

Changing objectives and training needs during the performance year

34. The line manager or the jobholder can change the objectives and the training needs at any point during the performance year. Where changes are made, these must be agreed by the line manager, countersigning officer and jobholder.

Line manager preparation for reviews

35. Line managers must fully prepare for interim and final reviews. They should give careful consideration to specific examples of work undertaken in advance of the meeting. They should not write the final comments prior to the meeting to ensure that the process is transparent and allows the jobholder to provide input and shape the final outcome.
36. The line manager should encourage a jobholder to provide self-assessment during the review. This can be done by asking such questions as (this list is not exhaustive):
 - “How do you feel things have gone?”
 - “What has gone well?”
 - “What has not gone so well?”
 - “What has been learnt and what could you have done differently?”
 - “Is there anything I can do to support you?”
 - “Is there anything in the way I work that makes it difficult for you to carry out your tasks? What could I do differently?”

Interim review

37. The interim review is an opportunity for job holders and their line managers to formally meet half way through the performance year. During this meeting they should:
 - discuss the performance against key activities, objectives and values over the first six months of the year;
 - discuss any training activities undertaken during the period and evaluate their impact;
 - plan further training activities if required; and
 - discuss and update objectives, if required.

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38. The jobholder should fully prepare for the interim review, giving careful consideration to specific examples of work undertaken. This will enable the jobholder to demonstrate progress against both their key activities and objectives.
39. The line manager should capture a summary of the performance to date, rather than record the conversation that took place at the interim review meeting. If there are no changes to the objectives or the training needs, the line manager and jobholder should agree the interim review.
40. If there are changes to either the objectives or the training needs, the line manager, jobholder and countersigning officer will need to agree them at the interim review stage.

Third party feedback

41. Where a jobholder works with a variety of colleagues, and the line manager is not fully involved in the work delivered, the line manager should contact these individuals, some of who may be from outside the organisation (this is not obligatory) and ask for feedback on the jobholder's performance and delivery of the task.
42. The line manager must agree with the jobholder which colleagues will be contacted in advance of the review meeting. Feedback should be sought in sufficient time to allow for a response. This can be done at interim and final review stage via an email to relevant colleagues.
43. Any feedback that a colleague provides must be constructive. The individual must bear in mind that this feedback is likely to be discussed and addressed as part of the jobholder's review, and therefore they should feel comfortable in providing such comments.

Feedback on the line manager and/ or countersigning officer

44. All staff will be invited to provide comments on their respective line manager and/ or countersigning officer, should they wish to do so. This will be completed via email and sent to the appropriate countersigning officer. This is not compulsory. Feedback will be requested well in advance of the planned appraisal dates in March each year and will allow upward feedback on the line manager's performance which could be used as part of the line manager's review. This feedback must be constructive. The jobholder must bear in mind that this feedback is likely to be discussed and addressed as part of their line manager's review, and therefore should feel comfortable in providing such comments.
45. HR will issue an email to prompt staff to provide this feedback.

Final review

46. The final review must reflect and comment on the performance of the jobholder throughout the performance year. The review must be conducted by the line manager and the jobholder should also prepare for the review meeting. During this meeting they should discuss the following:

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47. The review should focus on the achievement of key activities and objectives, and how the values are demonstrated.
48. The line manager must ensure that they not only focus on the final outcome of an objective, but also consider 'how' the jobholder achieved this task. There may have been circumstances during the year that changed the delivery of the objective, for example, the objective might have been straight forward when set at the start of the year, however external factors may have made this more difficult to achieve, therefore the line manager should take this into account during the review.
49. The final review should also take into account the behaviours the jobholder displays whilst working towards their objectives. Annex A details the values and indicative behaviours associated with these values that a line manager should refer to as part of the review. There may be times when a jobholder has achieved their objectives but their behaviours have had an adverse or positive effect on others. Such behaviours must be taken into account when deciding on the final review rating.

Training activities and evaluating their impact

50. It is important to evaluate any training undertaken to:
 - ensure learning objectives have been met;
 - establish value for money;
 - inform future training; and
 - evaluate the contribution of training and development to the achievement of the organisation's objectives.
51. The electronic system will pre-populate the 'review of training' comments box with the jobholder's comments from the training evaluation undertaken during the year. The line manager and jobholder should reflect upon these comments which can be amended as part of the final review. The line manager should discuss how the learning outcomes of the training have been put into practice, and how will they continue to be used by the jobholder. The line manager and jobholder should also consider whether any further training is required.

The final performance rating

52. All jobholders will be given a final performance rating at the end of each performance year. These are based on three assessment ratings, Exceptional, Good and Improvement Required. Justification for the rating must be included in the line manager's final review comments section.
53. The proposed final rating can be changed and/or challenged during the review meeting between the line manager and jobholder.
54. The line manager must refer to the table below when considering the final rating to ensure consistency across the organisation.
55. Where a line manager is considering giving an Exceptional rating or an Improvement Required rating, a rationale of the intention to award either of these ratings must be shared with the Chief Executive prior to the jobholder's review. This is to ensure

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consistency within the process and does not pre-empt any conversations with the jobholder.

56. It should be noted that there may be personal issues or extenuating circumstances impacting on a jobholder's performance, for example, sickness or bereavements. These must be taken in to account when assessing whether the jobholder could have reasonably met the required performance standards. A jobholder cannot be penalised for circumstances beyond their control.

Assessment Rating	Guidance
Exceptional (E)	<p>The requirements of the post must be exceeded in all of the areas being assessed (key activities, values and objectives). There must be no evidence of Improvement Required in any of the areas. Some elements may be considered as Good, but the majority would be Exceptional.</p> <p>To achieve an Exceptional rating the jobholder will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • made a significant contribution to the achievement of organisational objectives; • shown exceptional drive and commitment. This is not necessarily about working long hours although the employee may have been working under pressure, possibly in exceptional circumstances; and • demonstrated all HEFCW values in the course of their work, and their achievement will be generally recognised by colleagues. <p>Line managers must take in to account 'how' the work was completed, not only 'what' has been achieved.</p> <p>The particular circumstances that may demonstrate an Exceptional performance could be as follows (this list is not exhaustive):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of a key activity to a higher standard than required or expected. • Completion of an objective that was expected to be routine when set however influencing factors caused the objective to be more challenging. • Completion of work that was additional to the 'norm' and was not planned or expected and was critical to deliver. • Providing additional support within or across teams that are short staffed for a significant period of time. • Demonstrating work above their grade.
Good (G)	<p>The requirements of the post have been met in all of the areas being assessed (key activities, values and objectives).</p> <p>To achieve a Good rating the jobholder will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • carried out the full range of the key activities to the required standard, and may have exceeded in some areas;

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • achieved their objectives where possible; and • demonstrated the HEFCW values. <p>There may be some evidence of improvement required in certain elements, however these should not be significant and should not prevent the jobholder from obtaining a Good.</p> <p>The jobholder may still have room for improvement or development opportunities, but on the whole has performed to a good standard.</p>
<p>Improvement Required (IR)</p> <p>See section below on poor performance</p>	<p>The jobholder will have failed to meet the required standard for the post in one or more areas being assessed (key activities, values, or objectives) and has demonstrated significant performance inadequacies.</p> <p>Circumstances that may demonstrate Improvement Required could be as follows (this list is not exhaustive). The jobholder:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • might not have carried out the full range of the key activities to the required standard; and / or • may have only partly achieved or not achieved most or all of their objectives; and / or • might not have demonstrated most or all of the values to the level required for the post. <p>This may be because of a lapse or dip in performance or, generally, they may not be meeting expectations.</p> <p>The line manager should consider any training received and whether the performance plan was proportionate.</p> <p>The line manager must set an improvement plan with the job holder.</p>

57. Following the meeting, the final review comments section of the PDR should capture a summary of the performance for the year rather than record the conversation that took place.

58. Once the performance review meeting has been completed the final review will be agreed as follows:

- Line manager will submit final comments and rating
- Job holder to agree with comments
- Line manager to agree
- Countersigning officer to agree with comments

59. The jobholder has the right to disagree with the final rating, details of this process can be found below.

60. The final document will be saved in the history screen and a new performance plan will be available for the new performance year.

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Final review for new jobholders

61. A jobholder may not have had enough time in post to fully demonstrate their abilities. If a jobholder is performing to an expected standard, even if there are still some developmental areas, then a 'Good' can be awarded. A line manager should not assume that an 'Improvement Required' should be allocated due to the length of time the jobholder has been in post.
62. If a jobholder has not been able to complete a key activity due to the timing of their appointment, these key activities should not form part of the assessment and the job holder should be assessed on the remaining key activities, values and objectives.

Jobholder preparation for review

63. The jobholder should prepare for their review meeting, giving careful considerations to specific examples of work undertaken. This should be put forward during the review meeting, and the line manager must take in to account the evidence provided by a jobholder.
64. The jobholder should feel comfortable and confident in presenting their evidence and in challenging any line manager comments that they do not agree with. The jobholder should also feel comfortable to comment on their line manager's management style and how it impacts on their own performance.

Jobholder comments

65. The PDR has a section for jobholders to comment. The jobholder can include notes on self-assessment in this section, focusing on how they feel they have performed, any areas of improvement or any factors that may have affected them during the year. Jobholders are not required to complete this section however they are encouraged to do so.
66. This section also allows jobholders to provide feedback on any issues they may wish to raise about their line manager. These comments can refer to either concerns or positive feedback. The jobholder should only complete this section if they feel comfortable in doing so.
67. If the issue is serious and/or the jobholder does not feel comfortable in highlighting issues with the line manager, it is encouraged that they approach the countersigning officer directly. The opportunity to contact the countersigning officer before reviews begin will be available, as outlined above.

Countersigning Officer

68. The countersigning officer is usually the line manager's manager. During the performance year, they must agree:
 - the performance plan;
 - any changes to objectives and training during the year; and
 - the final review rating.

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69. The countersigning officer's responsibilities are to:
- ensure that line managers understand the system and are producing fair and consistent plans and reviews;
 - include specific comments on the jobholder's performance when agreeing the final review; and
 - oversee that all performance plans and reviews within their team are completed.
70. The countersigning officer can be consulted by the line manager for support and guidance at any stage during the performance year.
71. Where a countersigning officer has received an email with feedback about a line manager within their team they can discuss it with the jobholder if appropriate and they should take it in to account during the line manager's review.

Poor performance

72. Should a jobholder not be performing to the standard expected irrespective of length of service, a line manager must address the issue immediately. The line manager should meet with the jobholder and outline the concerns, ask if there are any reasons for the poor performance and establish if any additional support is required. The line manager should consult with HR to inform them of the issue and HR will be able to provide support and guidance during the process.
73. The line manager must document conversations following performance meetings with the jobholder and send copies to the jobholder, retaining all email trails on file.
74. Further to meeting with the jobholder, the line manager should draft a reasonable action plan to improve performance, outlining expectations and tasks to achieve the improved performance within a reasonable timescale. There is no set format to this action plan, they should be based around the principles of SMART objectives and the performance management system in general. If assistance is required in developing an action plan the line manager can contact HR for guidance.
75. If the performance does not improve within the timescales set, the line manager must refer to the Disciplinary policy.
76. Any instances of poor performance must be referred to in the interim or final review.
77. Where frequent poor performance is apparent during the year and no change has come about as a result of an action plan, the 'Improvement Required' rating should be allocated. This must be discussed with the Countersigning Officer and HR can be contacted for advice. Following this a rationale must be shared with the Chief Executive, outlining the full reasons for the rating, prior to the rating being issued to the jobholder.
78. The line manager may find that personal issues or extenuating circumstances are affecting the performance of a jobholder, in these circumstances the line manager should contact HR.

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Jobholder disagreement with final review and appeals

79. Where an employee wishes to appeal against a final rating, informal discussions must take place in the first instance. The jobholder should request a meeting with their line manager where they must clearly outline their concerns and provide evidence to support any reasons why an alternative rating should be given. Informal arrangements for resolving issues are outlined in the Grievance procedures.
80. Should the informal discussions not bring about a resolution, the PDR system allows the jobholder to formally disagree with the final review. The process would be as follows:
- Line manager submits a draft final review.
 - Jobholder disagrees with the review.
 - Jobholder must answer “Do you wish to proceed to a grievance”.
 - If ‘No’ is selected, comments must be written by the jobholder as to why they disagree.
 - Line manager has the opportunity to comment and sign off the review.
 - Countersigning officer has the opportunity to comment and sign off the review.
81. Where the jobholder says ‘Yes’ and does wish to proceed to a grievance, the PDR process will stop and the Grievance procedures will be invoked. Where a jobholder answers ‘Yes’ they are confirming that they wish to go to an appeal. The Grievance procedures will act as the formal appeals’ mechanism.

Break reports

82. Where a jobholder changes post, line manager/ team, or their line manager is due to leave HEFCW part way through the year, their previous line manager must complete a break report and meet to discuss this with the jobholder. The break report must cover the whole period that the jobholder has been in post for that performance year and must be completed within one month of the change.
83. This break report must be conducted in the same way as any other review through a meeting and must be shared and agreed with the jobholder. The previous line manager must include a final rating for that period.
84. The break report will be passed to the new line manager and they must take this into account when completing the final review.
85. The break report can be written in the interim review section or if this is not possible, should be done via email.

Provision of inadequate performance plans and reviews

86. If a jobholder is dissatisfied with the quality of the line manager’s performance plans and/ or reviews they should raise this with HR, who will be able to assess if there are issues and arrange training as necessary.

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System administration

87. HR will have access to view all plans and reviews. This will allow any issues or trends to be identified.
88. The training booking process will be managed by HR via the PDR electronic system.
89. HR will have report functions for the following:
- training needs
 - final ratings
 - status/stage of completion
 - evaluation feedback and ratings
 - ad hoc reports requested via the change request system

Version	Date	Description
0.1	March 2014	New document created in line with new PDR system
0.2	May 2014	Revised by Management Board following review
0.3	June 2014	Presented to Works Council and amendments made following staff consultation.
0.4	June 2014	Equality Impact Assessment completed
1.0	July 2014	Approved by HR Committee

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HEFCW Values

Annex A

The table details HEFCW's values and provides examples of positive and negative behaviours that illustrate these values. The list of indicative behaviours is not exhaustive.

Value	Indicative Positive Behaviours	Indicative Negative Behaviours
<p>Acting with Integrity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be consistent • Be truthful • Be open • Communicates frankly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adheres to policies and procedures • Protects others' privacy • Provides honest and open feedback • Displays sensitivity and tact • Treats similar cases similarly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is unreliable • Offers biased views • Has an inconsistent approach • Disregards policies and procedures • Seeks own gain to the detriment of others
<p>Professionalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply knowledge & expertise confidently • Know/address your audience • Take responsibility for own area • Exercise due discretion • Seek continuous improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produces high standards of work • Displays appropriate behaviour • Manages workload proactively and with priority • Addresses audience appropriately • Displays discretion • Behaves firmly and courteously in dealings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays carelessness and poor standard of work • Lacks commitment and is unreliable • Is indiscreet • Is disrespectful to colleagues • Is ineffective in communication • Misses deadlines
<p>Forward Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scan horizon actively • Plan tasks & assess risks effectively • Prioritise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is proactive • Seeks continual improvement in work and procedures • Promotes and encourages new ideas and ways of working • Plans and completes tasks within timeframe • Thinks ahead to identify problems and solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is reactive • Resists change • Shows minimal productivity • Acts defensively • Waits until items reach crisis point • Is unprepared • Displays insularity

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<p>Partnership Working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify partners (internal, external) • Be clear about outcomes sought • Develop effective working relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages in and develops relationships • Shares information with others • Consults and collaborates with others • Maintains good working relationships • Co-operates with colleagues and partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is unapproachable • Operates in isolation • Avoids consultation and collaboration • Has a rude or unhelpful attitude • Has poor working relationships
<p>Valuing & Supporting Each Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect others' views • Value each others' skills/contributions • Give & receive effective feedback • Respond to others' priorities • Provide help (formal/informal) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respects other views • Seeks to help and support others • Acknowledges differences and makes positive use of these • Is considerate to others' needs and circumstances • Is constructive with feedback • Meets deadlines to ensure these do not adversely affect others • Listens actively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not co-operate with others • Lacks appreciation of others' contribution • Denies responsibility • Has an insensitive attitude • Is critical of others • Ignores others' views, queries or concerns • Is disrespectful