

# Employee Appraisal

## Introduction

The County Council requires all Directorates to use this Corporate Employee Appraisal template. All employees must have a formal annual appraisal (and six-monthly review), which includes:

- Setting, reviewing and assessing achievement of objectives
- Identifying learning and development needs to support achievement of objectives and competencies

Appraisals maximise the employee's contribution to the Directorate, the Council and the public.

The employee's objectives and personal performance targets should be consistent with the objectives of their team, Unit and Directorate. The appraisal process focuses on how the employee's work contributes to the achievement of the Council's priorities and aspirations.

The appraisal process plays a key role in our organisational development. It is a central feature of good management practice that employees are given regular and accurate feedback on their work.

Employee appraisal is also part of the ongoing management process whereby the employee and manager keep in touch with support needs, performance and the context of the person's work activities. Performance Appraisal is a continuous activity, rather than something which is done once or twice a year.

## Embedding Equality and Diversity

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Equality and diversity is about removing prejudice and discrimination from society. Local Authorities have a major part to play in promoting equality and diversity.

By building equalities into the appraisal process, we ensure that good practice is captured, and that all employees have the opportunity to embed equality in the way they work.

## **Appraisals and the Council Plan**

Every employee of the Council contributes to the delivery of our Council Plan. Appraisals provide the opportunity to talk about the employee's role and how they contribute to the Council Plan, delivering services that improve the quality of people's lives in a joined up way.

The good news is that you do not need to read the whole plan, there is an easy to use interactive version on Intouch.

The plan sets out what the Council wants to achieve over the next three years, but connections between it and each service have already been made. Directorate, service and unit service plans tie in key activities or targets to those of the Council Plan.

Before an appraisal takes place, managers and employees need to prepare by looking at the relevant service plan and taking a look at the Council Plan summary which sets out the aim and aspirations of the Council together with the Council's values and mission. The Council Plan and summary can be found on Intouch following this link

<http://www.intouch.ccc/councilplan/default.asp>

## **Aims of employee appraisal**

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The process involves self appraisal and line manager appraisal in order to achieve the following:

- **Service delivery**

- To define and ensure the quality of services.
- To ensure flexible services that address equality and diversity issues.
- To monitor and evaluate performance in order to promote continuous improvement.

- **Communication**

- To give employees an opportunity to reinforce the main purposes and priorities of the Council and how their objectives relate to the Directorate Service Plan and the Council Plan.
- To enable employees to discuss their role in the changing face of the Council.
- To understand the equality implications of working for the Council.
- To foster a culture in the organisation of positive leadership, and build an environment that recognizes everyone's contribution.

- **Performance**

- To give appraisee and appraiser the opportunity to review performance of objectives and the context against which these have been carried out.
- To agree targets and objectives for the next period that relate to the Directorate's Service Plans and the Council Plan, with clear time-frames for achieving these.
- To agree on how equality impacts on the appraisee's job, including their relationship with colleagues, service users and the wider public.
- To enhance performance, motivation, self-confidence and mutual understanding of both appraisee and appraiser.

- **Development**

- To reinforce the Council's commitment to underpinning performance improvement with appropriate learning, training and development opportunities.
- To review how previous learning and development has contributed to the achievement of specific Council Plan and Service Plan objectives.
- To review learning and development received – what was learned, how it was used at work and who has benefited.
- To identify individual learning and development needs, agreeing time-frames for meeting these needs according to priorities, budgets, and existing knowledge and competence levels.
- To ensure that all employees have the e-skills needed to underpin effective delivery of e-services throughout the Council.
- To consider possible learning solutions and methods of measuring the effectiveness of the learning and development.
- To support workforce development within the Council.
- To give employees an opportunity to discuss career aspirations.

## Principles

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Appraisal is based on a balance of accountability between the Council and individual employees.

### **The Directorate and Managers are accountable for:**

- Ensuring that appraisals are taking place for all employees.
- Ensuring that managers operate effectively, through supervision, communication and the provision of resources within allocated budgets.
- Providing clear direction to employees on tasks, priorities and required standards of work.
- Providing opportunities for learning and development in relation to policies, priorities and objectives
- Assessing performance against the requirements of the job and standards, behaviours and competencies of the Council

### **The individual employee is accountable for:**

- Actively engaging in the appraisal process.
- Performing allocated tasks effectively, and within agreed time-scales.
- Adhering to defined standards of performance and legal requirements.
- Assisting in identifying their own learning and development needs, and cooperating in meeting those needs.

## **Learning and development methods**

These may include all types of formal and informal ways of gaining skills, knowledge and confidence, such as 'one-to-one on the job training; informal coaching, mentoring; secondments; work shadowing; reading; watching videos; internal workshops and corporate and department-based events as well as external courses.

## **Evaluation of learning and development activities and outcomes**

This can only be done properly if we identify criteria at the outset which will then be used later to assess whether the new skills/knowledge have been successfully applied to the job and the service provided.

Evaluation is critical to ensuring that the learning has been effective, that performance (and service outcomes) improve, and for planning future learning and development activities.

## **Appraisal and Supervision**

Appraisal interviews will take place annually, with six monthly reviews. However appraisal is part of the wider employee management processes of the County Council and

complements ongoing supervision. Managers must meet with their employees regularly to jointly review progress against objectives, to discuss and resolve issues arising, take appropriate actions as necessary, and to ensure that appropriate support is provided.

This will also provide the opportunity to ensure that learning and development outcomes are discussed and embedded and to ensure Health & Safety issues, including risk assessments are covered.

## **The Appraisal Form**

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**Section 1** Is simply a record of who and when the appraisal happened.

### **Section 2 Your objectives**

Before the appraisal, both appraisee and appraiser map out the appraisee's future objectives. They need to be linked to either the Council Plan or team plan objectives. These will then be jointly agreed at the appraisal and be:

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Achievable**
- **Realistic**
- **Time-bound**

### **Section 3 Competencies (Core Council behaviours)**

This section should be drafted by the appraisee and then discussed with the appraiser during the appraisal, looking at areas of development and actions needed. Included in this section should be examples of how the appraisee meets the corporate behaviours and how they can continue to build on what they have already achieved.

### **Section 4 Your learning and development plan**

This should reflect the learning and development necessary to support the objectives and competencies within available resources.

### **Section 5 End of Year Summary**

This section allows both the appraisee and appraiser to reflect on achievements, progress and overall performance for the last 12 months

## **Appendix 1**

Each service area will decide the documents that need checked at appraisal. Appraisees will need to bring the relevant documents to the appraisal. Some examples include car insurance documents, professional registrations and valid CRB. The Information Security course is available on the Learning Zone at <http://cumbria.learningpool.com/>

## **Preparation check-lists**

Both appraiser and appraisee need to prepare for the interview. The following check-list is a prompt to ensure that the process is fully effective and focuses on appropriate activity.

### ***Appraiser***

1. Find a neutral venue and consider room arrangement. Confirm date and agree venue with appraisee.
2. Gather relevant information: job profile, Service Plan, Council Plan, previous appraisal form, records of recent learning, training and development activities.
3. Review appraisee's individual targets as agreed at previous meeting.
4. List the appraisee's successes and set-backs over the review period. How did the appraisee respond to challenges?
5. Reflect on:
  - the contribution that informal/formal learning and development activities undertaken have made to the achievement of the appraisee's objectives. You may ask yourself the question, 'how is the appraisee doing their job differently?'/ 'what can the appraisee do that they could not do before?'
  - the appraisee's strengths and learning and development needs. Reflect on possible training solutions to meet these learning and development needs, bearing in mind the learning style of the individual.
  - existing skills that are not being fully utilised for the benefit of the individual and/or the rest of the team.
6. Make a diary date for the next appraisal or appraisal review meeting.

### ***Appraisee***

1. Approach the appraisal meeting with a positive frame of mind and undertake an accurate and rigorous self-review.
2. Read again your Job Specification and those parts of the Service Plan and Council Plan information to which you make a contribution, whether directly or indirectly.
3. Review progress in meeting the performance targets agreed at your last appraisal meeting.

4. Summarise your key successes and set-backs over the review period from your point of view. How did you attempt to overcome any obstacles? (Normally speaking, you will already have discussed these matters with your line manager at the time)
5. Reflect on the contribution that informal/formal learning and development activities undertaken have made to the achievement of your objectives. You may ask yourself the question, 'how am I doing my job differently?' or 'what can I do that I could not do before?'
6. In considering your current and future contribution to the Service Plan and Council Plan, think about what learning and development needs you may have to fill in gaps in your skills, knowledge, attitude, competence, and confidence. You might like to reflect on possible solutions to meet these learning and development needs, bearing in mind the way you like to learn.
7. Consider any existing skills that you have that are not being fully utilised for the benefit of you and/or the rest of the team. Are there any skills that you have that could be passed onto your colleagues?
8. What do you wish to achieve in your career?

### **Access to appraisal records, confidentiality and quality management**

The content of the appraisal should remain confidential. However, the appraisal is a key part of the organisation's performance management process and as such, needs to be accountable for its quality and effectiveness. When directorates collate individual development plans, this should act as a means to check the quality of objective-setting and evaluation.

### **Monitoring frequency and equality monitoring**

Line managers are accountable for completing and recording the appraisals and reviews they conduct with their staff. **From April 2013 managers are able to use the integrated HR management system, iTrent People Manager, to directly input and record the completion of appraisals and reviews as explained below.**

**iTrent recording of Appraisal completion:**

**Use the 'Performance Appraisal Reviews' link under 'Learning and Development' on the Home Page. Search for the employee. Select the 'Review Type' from the drop down list. Enter the Date of Appraisal and Next Review Date. Note the 'Overall Rating' field is not currently used.**

The completion and recording of appraisals should also be picked up in a manager's own appraisal and review interviews, as a standard item.

## **Use of Employee Appraisal Template**

In order that the Council manages its performance effectively, individual performance appraisal activity needs to be consistent across the Council – so that objectives are cascaded, set, actioned and monitored in the same fashion everywhere.

The appraisal template will be used by all directorates and at all levels within each directorate. The whole process must be followed.