



Framework for Employee Development

September 2015

Section 1

Framework

1.1 Context

The Council has a responsibility to ensure that an appropriate workforce structure is in place to meet the organisational vision, values and performance objectives, and to deliver high quality, cost effective and integrated services to the people of South Ayrshire. We recognise the need to align to and integrate with our workforce and succession planning activities and our service and financial planning activities.

This Framework sets out our plans to support and develop our employees to ensure that they can carry out their role safely and competently to the highest standards and, where appropriate, to provide opportunities for career development. The Framework gives clear guidance for managers to ensure that all employee development activities and interventions relate directly to the Council's competency framework, deliver the outcomes identified in our Workforce Strategy and support the effective delivery of Service and Improvement Plans.

The Framework for Employee Development includes the following documents:

- Induction Policy
- Performance and Development Review Policy
- Employee Development Policy
- Guidance documents for Managers

The Framework sets out the Council's commitment and approach to employee development and the responsibilities of individual Managers and Employees.

1.2 Scope

The Framework has been developed in conjunction with the Trades Unions and applies to all employees with the exception of teaching staff, for whom separate arrangements exist. It outlines how the Council will ensure access to employee development is transparent and equitable and is fully compliant with the Council's Equality Policy and the Equality Act 2010.

This framework sets out the Council's approach to the provision of Employee Development. The responsibilities of Managers are clearly set out within this policy which should be reflected in any Directorate or Service Employee Development strategies or plans.

This Framework covers all Employee Development activities: Induction; Performance and Development Review; and Employee Development. We recognise the importance of investing in learning and development at all levels of the organisation. We aim to provide a flexible and blended learning approach to development that is based on identified training needs at both an individual and team level and that is aligned to the PDR process. We have a wide range of in-house learning

opportunities and externally sourced resources which take a blended learning approach, including on-line learning, face-to-face training, workshops, guidance materials, and practical development opportunities.

1.3 Principles

Our priority will always be to ensure that employees are proficient in the skills they need to carry out their work safely, and that where appropriate, employee development activities comply with any regulatory or legislative requirement.

In relation to workforce planning, we will also support the development of our employees to ensure that they have the skills that we will need in future to deliver modern, efficient services.

1.4 Definitions

For the purposes of this framework the term 'manager' refers to the person who is responsible for supervising or managing, directly or indirectly, the work of another and who has responsibility for ensuring that an employee has access to relevant development opportunities, has a clear set of measurable work objectives and who is responsible for carrying out the employee's Performance and Development Review (PDR).

Section 2

Induction Policy

2.1 Introduction

An effective and structured induction ensures that the employment relationship starts in the best possible way. While formal induction procedures generally focus on organisational knowledge and role specific development, it is also important that induction is used to make new employees feel welcomed to the organisation and to help them to settle into a new team and work environment. A comprehensive, robust induction is essential to ensure that all new employees:

- Feel welcomed to the organisation;
- Are familiar with how the Council operates, its structure and decision making processes;
- Understand their role and how it fits in their team and the wider organisation;
- Understand the key activities and objectives of their Service, their Directorate and the Council;
- Understand their responsibilities in terms of ensuring they are safe and compliant in their new role and work environment;
- Are familiar with the Code of Conduct and all relevant policies and procedures;
- Understand their rights and responsibilities as employees;
- Understand how to access and use any tools, equipment or systems relevant to their role; and
- Know who they can speak to if they have any issues, queries or concerns.

2.2 Employees' Responsibilities

All new employees must participate in and engage with activities, information and events that comprise the blended Induction process; including completing the on-line Corporate and Directorate Induction courses on COAST, which is the Council's on-line learning system.

2.3 Managers' Responsibilities

Managers must ensure all new employees are provided with access to information, advice, guidance and induction materials and activities relating to the Council, and their service. Full details, including an Induction Checklist, are included in the Guidance Documents for Managers section of this Framework.

In some instances there may be a requirement for an employee to attend training which is essential to their role to ensure that they are working safely and in compliance with regulations or legislation. Managers must identify any essential training and ensure that the employee attends this either before they actually start work, or before they undertake any specific duties for which the training has been identified as essential.

Section 3

Performance and Development Review Policy

3.1 Introduction

The Performance and Development Review (PDR) process is in place to provide employees with a clear set of work objectives, to identify any learning and development needs and to measure competence against the Council's competency framework. PDR is a process which helps managers to manage the performance and development of their teams and to maintain clear, transparent and effective levels of performance within their service.

The PDR documentation, including the competency framework and a detailed step-by-step guide to carrying out PDR's is included in the Guidance Documents for Managers section of this framework.

PDR meetings should be held annually and take the format of a two way discussion about performance, work objectives and development. The purpose of PDR is to:

- Provide a clear link between the Council's strategic objectives, Service and Improvement Plans, Team plans and individual goals;
- Ensure a planned approach to employee development, where employees have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and how their role links to the overall performance of the Council;
- Assess and review an employee's performance against the competencies for their role and any key work objectives which were set last year;
- Agree key work objectives and development needs for the forthcoming year;
- Identify any support required to develop skills, knowledge or performance;
- Provide an opportunity to discuss development and career aspirations;
- Recognise employee achievements; and
- In accordance with the Framework for Managing Performance, highlight areas where there are concerns about poor or under-performance and identify measures to address these.

The PDR process includes an Interim Review which can be initiated by either the employee or manager during the 12-month rolling PDR Cycle. This Interim Review is not compulsory but it is good practice to have a mid-point review to provide a useful opportunity to discuss progress and, if necessary, amend objectives to reflect changes that have occurred since the preliminary meeting.

New employees must undergo an initial PDR within 3 months of taking up employment with the Council or moving into a new role.

The Corporate Management Team has collective responsibility for ensuring that all employees in the Council have an annual PDR.

3.2 Employees' Responsibilities

Employees must perform their role to the best of their ability and should raise any concerns or barriers that are, or may, detrimentally affect performance as these occur or are identified and not wait until a formal PDR meeting.

Employees should prepare for their PDR in advance, reflecting on their own performance, achievement of previously set objectives and learning and development they have undertaken. They should also consider what work objectives they need to achieve in the forthcoming year.

Employees should work collaboratively with their manager throughout the PDR process. They should contribute to the identification of key work objectives, discuss their achievements and identify any development needs they feel they have for the forthcoming year.

Employees must undertake any learning and development needs identified through the PDR process. If they are not able to do this for any reason, they must raise this with their manager immediately and not wait until the next PDR meeting to discuss this.

3.3 Managers' Responsibilities

Managers must provide regular, constructive feedback to employees and must address underperformance at the earliest opportunity, informally or formally as appropriate and in line with the Capability Policy and not raise issues of underperformance for the first time at a PDR meeting.

Managers must ensure that every employee receives an annual PDR which reviews their performance against the competencies for the role and the agreed key work objectives for the previous 12 months.

Managers must provide a set of clear and measurable objectives for the forthcoming 12 months and ensure that the employee fully understands these and how they will be able to demonstrate that they have achieved them.

Managers must ensure that employees are familiar with the competency framework and the matrix for their post and how they are expected to demonstrate these competencies.

Managers will agree a Personal Development Plan (PDP) with the employee which sets out their development needs for the next 12 months. Development should be relevant to the employee's role or to support agreed career development and should not be confined to classroom based training, but contain a wide range of learning and experiential activities and should include coaching and on-the-job training. Further information on employee development opportunities and methods can be found in the Guidance for Managers or can be sought from the Organisational Development Team.

Where a training course is identified as an appropriate intervention or where a training course is part of the essentials programme relating to the individual's role, Managers must ensure employees attend.

Managers must complete all PDR documentation and ensure accurate records of completion are maintained. Full guidance documentation is contained within the Guidance for Managers section of this framework.

3.4 Countersigning Managers' Responsibilities

The PDR document should be signed by both the Manager and Employee. There is also the opportunity for signature by a Countersigning Manager, who will normally be senior to the Manager conducting the PDR.

The Countersigning Manager's role is to provide a quality assurance approach to the PDR process in terms of ensuring that it is being applied fairly and consistently. Where an employee reports to a number of different people, the Countersigning Manager is responsible for identifying who should conduct the PDR.

An employee who disagrees with their Manager's assessment of their performance, should, in the first instance, raise their concerns with the Manager. If agreement cannot be reached the employee should outline their position in writing to the Countersigning Manager.

The Countersigning Manager will review the PDR documentation and the employee's submission and hold a meeting at which both the employee and Manager can outline their respective positions. The employee can be accompanied by a colleague or Trades Union representative. The representative can address the meeting and ask questions but cannot answer any questions asked of the employee.

Following this meeting, the Countersigning Manager will confirm their decision in writing to the employee and the manager within 10 working days of the meeting. The Countersigning Manager's decision is final and there is no further right of review or appeal.

Section 4

Learning and Development Policy

4.1 Introduction

Although it is anticipated that an employee's development needs will be identified either at induction or through the PDR process, needs may emerge throughout the year, for example, as a result of changes to processes, legislation, technology or operating arrangements.

Any individual learning and development requirements should be based on the needs of the post and the service and should contribute to an improvement in individual performance, skills, and competence.

The Council adopts a blended approach to learning which includes the delivery of classroom based training, self-directed study and e-learning. Employees will be granted appropriate time away from normal duties to undertake any identified training

4.2 Employees' Responsibilities

Employees must attend and/or undertake any learning and development activity identified as being essential for their job or personal performance, including undertaking e-learning if required. Where an employee does not attend an internal course and has not cancelled, the manager will be notified.

Employees should identify any development needs they consider essential to enable them to effectively undertake their job and discuss these with their Manager.

4.3 Managers' Responsibilities

Managers should identify the learning and development needs of employees to ensure safe, compliant and competent performance.

If a learning and development intervention is considered mandatory, for example in relation to health and safety, in compliance with regulation or legislation, or as part of the Employee or Management Essentials programme relating to the individual's role, Managers must ensure employees attend.

Managers must ensure that they notify Organisational Development (OD) of all training and development activities undertaken by employees, other than those organised by OD themselves. This is to ensure that a central database of records can be maintained. Further information on the processes for this is contained within the Guidance for Managers section of this Framework.

4.4 Coaching and Mentoring

The Council supports learning through a coaching and mentoring approach in the workplace. These are development techniques based on the use of one-to-one discussions to enhance an individual's skills, knowledge or work performance.

Coaching targets high performance and improvement at work and usually focuses on specific skills and goals, although it may also have an impact on an individual's personal attributes such as social interaction or confidence. The process typically lasts for a relatively short defined period of time, but can also form the basis of an on-going management style.

Mentoring involves the use of the same models and skills of questioning, listening, clarifying and reframing associated with coaching, however it tends to describe a relationship in which a more experienced colleague uses their greater knowledge and understanding to support the development of a less senior or experienced member of staff. Both parties must recognise their responsibilities in relation to coaching and mentoring. These will be unique to each situation as it will depend on factors such as learning styles, experience and the personality of both parties, but should include: a commitment from both parties to participate; jointly agreed expectations and outcomes; agreed arrangements for review and feedback, including how any problems can be raised and addressed; and agreement on confidentiality. Further information can be found in the Guidance for Managers Section of this Framework.

4.5 External Training or Education

In some circumstances, the Council may support an employee by providing financial assistance for them to undertake external training or education which is linked to their job role

Where a manager identifies a requirement for an employee to undertake funded external training or education, they must complete the appropriate application forms and submit these to the Head of Employee and Customer Services for final approval before any commitment is made or training/learning programme starts. However, if the employee subsequently leaves the Council, steps will be taken to recover any course fees as appropriate. Full details of this are contained in the Guidance for Managers section of this Framework.

For conferences or short courses of one or two days length, Managers have discretion to approve the course fee and to authorise time off to attend, without having to obtain Head of Service approval provided the cost of these is reasonable and within their authorisation levels. Where Managers are unsure whether the cost is reasonable, they should always seek approval from their Head of Service.

Travelling expenses will be paid to employees undertaking internal training and approved external conferences or short courses, in accordance with the Council's Travel and Subsistence Policy and will only be paid beyond usual home to workplace costs.

4.6 Time to Train

The Council's policy on flexible working allows employees to request time off to train or study. To apply, employees must complete a flexible working application form in line with the flexible working policy.

In line with the Special Leave Policy, employees will be granted reasonable time off to sit examinations as part of a work related course of study. In determining what is reasonable, managers must take into account the needs of the service. Further guidance is provided in the Guidance for Managers Section of this Framework and within the Special Leave Policy.

The flexi time scheme states that where an employee is absent from work for all development activities they will be regarded as having worked standard hours during the period of their absence. Time to travel to and from external courses and conferences will not accrue flexi time.

If an employee identifies any learning and development including on-line learning that they wish to undertake that is not directly related to their role or is out with any development agreed by their Manager, they must do so in their own time.