

Workforce Development

Supporting our workforce to thrive

The approach

Our approach to workforce development seeks to help managers and employees have regular, quality conversations focussed on wellbeing, motivation, aspirations, strengths and how employees can perform their role to the best of their ability.

The aim is that through regular check-ins strong, trusting relationships will develop and strengthen, putting performance into context to support our people to thrive, feel valued at work and deliver the council's aims and objectives.

At WLDC we recognise the importance of our workforce. Our managers aim to get the best out of you by supporting you to thrive at work.

We are moving away from an annual appraisal system to a continuous and responsive approach. We are leaving behind our paper templates to focus on the part that really matters – **good relationships between individuals and their managers** and ultimately better outcomes for our residents.

Managers and employees must have regular meetings that pick-up successes and performance issues as well as talking about wellbeing and personal development in a way that works for them. It may not be a formal sit down meeting every four weeks, it could be a quick check- in at lunchtime, during a video call or discussing a piece of work at your desk or in a virtual environment (such as MSTeams). It might be giving 'in the moment' feedback after someone's presentation at a meeting you've just been to, or a chat after a difficult interaction with a customer.

It's about agreeing what works best for the manager and individual, based on the circumstances and the way your team works.

The aim is that line managers will **enable and empower** employees in their work by outlining expectations and priorities, providing feedback and praise, and highlighting any areas for development regularly. This will allow employees to be clear on what outcomes are expected and if anything needs to change. We encourage line managers to take a flexible approach.

This is shared opportunity to talk about things that matter to you.

Keep it simple!

The three elements to good workforce development are:

1. Regular, meaningful conversations between employees and their manager.
2. Positive, regular feedback – including praise and areas for development.
3. Short to medium objectives, for work and personal development. Keep the objectives relevant and achievable.

Framework for managers

1. The framework below enables great communication. It has been developed to assist in structuring conversations.
2. The framework has four sections that may be used as a basis for discussion. These are wellbeing and resilience, performance, relationships, and professional development.
3. The framework does not replace professional supervision meetings as required by regulatory bodies or from professional expectation.
4. It is up to managers and staff to agree the frequency of the conversations. It is suggested that they take place at least every 6 weeks. There is no mandatory requirement to keep a detailed record every conversation, but it is recommended that you record the date, details and main points of your discussion on People First.
5. Managers must carry out more formal reviews with staff when determining to award professional development or career grades.
6. Be prepared to listen and explore ideas, rather than dismiss them.
7. The capability procedure remains in place to tackle under-performance and if there is a concern, record keeping is essential. Please speak to HR for support regarding this.
8. Remember – the increased frequency of check-ins improves the ongoing working relationship – regular dialogue, real-time praise and feedback creates a safe environment in which people can do their best work.

The framework provides a structure to the conversation. Under each heading are some suggested prompts to support your conversations during check-ins.

Wellbeing and resilience

How are you feeling?

How's work going?

How's your work-life balance?

How can we support you? Is there anything you need from me?

Are you finding anything particularly demanding?

What are you feeling the most positive about?

How are you looking after yourself at the moment?

Is there anything that it would be helpful to talk through?

How's your work environment?

Performance 'what are the outcomes?'

Let's talk about
your current
work priorities.

What do you
need to get done
in the next few
weeks?

What is preventing
you from achieving
that target- how can
we overcome this?

What could we
do differently?

What could we
improve?

Let's discuss
your current
work plan.

Relationships- 'how we work together'.

How do you feel
the team works
together?

Can I do anything
to help?

Which areas of work
do you find easy/
most difficult?

What does a great
day at work look
like?

What tangible
things could make
work easier or
more enjoyable?

How do we work
together to get
the best results?

Professional development

What training and development do you need?

What skills would you like to develop?

What are your career aspirations? What do you want to achieve next?

How can I support you with your learning and development?

Would you like a mentor or coaching support?

Is there anything that makes you feel stuck?

Are there any areas of the organisation or workload that you particularly enjoy?

Would you like to be a workplace champion?

Is there anyone in the team that you would like to learn more from?

Remember: these are prompts only and are not exhaustive.

Record of discussion

Employee:	
Manager:	
Date:	

Guidance note: This is an opportunity to discuss progress and learning at work. It is good practise to have check-ins with all employees on a regular basis. It is recommended that this happens at least every 6 weeks. Please keep a record of the check-in. This can be as brief or lengthy as needed.

1. Wellbeing and support
2. Performance
3. Relationships
4. Professional development

Signed employee:	Date:
Signed manager:	Date:

Frequently Asked Questions

Here are some FAQs to help you and your team – if you need an answer to anything that isn't covered here, please contact HR.

Do I still need to complete probation reports for new starters?

Yes – there is no change to our probation procedure.

What's changing? I already have quality conversations with my team members.

Please continue to do so! We encourage this. Our current annual appraisal process is ending, so there is no need to complete the annual appraisal template. Our approach seeks to add some flexibility into the way we manage our employees, and should be seen as a positive change.

Can I still use a 1:1 discussion template if I want to?

Yes – you are free to use whatever works for you and your team members if you choose to record those conversations; this may be more appropriate for managers who have team members assigned with Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) objectives.

What if someone in my team is not performing?

If under- performance is identified our capability process should be followed – please do ensure notes are taken to evidence concerns and speak to an HR Adviser for support.

I'm not comfortable talking about wellbeing with my employees.....

It's part of our duty of care as an employer to support wellbeing of our employees. Managers are not expected to provide specific medical advice on mental health conditions – use the conversations prompts in this document as a guide. Simply asking 'How are you' is a good place to start. Remember you can signpost employees to our Employee Assistance Programme 'Health Assured' which can be located on Minerva or to one of our Mental Health First Aiders.

My manager hasn't been talking to me about these things – what should I do?

In the first instance raise it directly with your manager – let them know that you want those ongoing discussions and value them or you may even want to let them know that you feel you aren't discussing your performance in the way that you wish, and remind them of the new approach.

Discussing performance in a meaningful way is a two-way responsibility – it relies on commitment from both the manager and the individual.

If you feel that you cannot have a conversation about this with your manager, get in touch with the HR team who can help.

JSCC approved:	
Corporate Policy and Resources Committee approved:	