

Chapter 3

Managing the PRC Meetings - Guidelines for Managers

In this Chapter you will learn how a Manager will implement the PRC including

- How to prepare for the first, mid cycle & cycle end review meetings
- How to conduct the first, mid cycle & final review meetings

'If we look for success, we will find and create more successes. On the contrary, if we look for problems, we will find and create more problems'

3.0 The purpose of the PRC meetings is for both parties to meet and

- discuss, clarify and agree role, key objectives and priorities for the cycle ahead
- discuss resources, risks, supports required
- discuss learning and growth requirements
- discuss how performance will be reviewed at the end of the cycle

3.1 Preparing for the Performance Planning and Personal Development Meeting (Meeting 1)

Ideally the cycle is preceded by a team discussion on the unit's service delivery requirements contained in the current service plan and team skills required for the coming year.

3.1.1 Part 1: Performance Planning Meeting

In preparation for this meeting you might:

- **review the completed section 1.2 of the PRC** form in respect of individuals reporting to you
- **Ensure that you have met with your own Manager** so that you are clear on the team's objectives and priorities for the forthcoming year. These will inform and provide direction for the objectives for those on your team
- **Set some time aside to review the objectives** you have agreed with your manager and how you plan to reach those objectives in the short, medium and longer term. You will need to be able to describe your expectations unambiguously to your team.

- **Performance standards** – Are you clear on the performance standards required for the coming year? You will need to be able to describe the required standards in a way that gets the interest and attention required.
- **Decide how you plan to reach your own objectives** by working through your team; which team member might best be suited to different projects/responsibility areas; what are the development needs of individuals and how might they be met in how you allocate objectives across the team?
- **For each member of your team consider the purpose of the role and the priorities** for the coming year
- **Look at the balance of work across the team** – is there equivalence/fairness in relation to the distribution of work?
- **Clarify for yourself how you are going to implement the performance review process** and how you are going to get staff involvement
- **Plan how you will approach the meeting**; decide on the structure and what points you would like to cover during the meeting
- **Be familiar with the documentation** that you need to complete in support of the performance review process i.e. the PRC Form – know who needs to complete what sections, and when (see Chapter 5)
- **Make any relevant documentation available to each individual** on your team before you meet with them
- **Agree well in advance the date and time of the meeting** – and stick to it! It is no harm to issue confirmation that the meeting will take place as scheduled, and in the location agreed
- **Commit to a start and finish time** for the meeting and stick to that
- **Ensure that the venue picked will be free from distractions** for the duration of the meeting
- **Put mobile phones on silent!**

3.1.2 Part 2: Personal/Professional Development

The purpose of this part of the meeting is for the manager to review with the individual their developmental needs required to achieve performance targets. The following points should be discussed:

- a review of the knowledge, skills and abilities required in the role
- a review of the individual's current level of development

- service driven CPD or PDP
- statutory/professional requirements where relevant, e.g. Professional Competency Scheme for registered practitioners under the Medical practitioners Act 2007
- identification of any knowledge or skill gaps that might benefit from additional support

In preparation for this part of the meeting you might:

- **Reflect on the strengths** of each individual you are meeting and be able to talk about examples of situations where they demonstrated positive strengths over the previous period. You may learn a lot by exploring with the individual a piece of work that went particularly well in the last period e.g. by identifying (1) what actions or behaviours contributed to the success (2) how they and others managed the situation/worked together – this may be very useful in terms of ensuring positive outcomes for similar projects into the future.
- **Consider their achievements** in the past and how s/he might be able to expand on their strengths and develop their skills further in the year ahead
- **Reflect on the personal/professional development needs** of the individual and be prepared to talk about specific examples of where performance did or did not meet the standard required – consider what evidence you have to support that assessment and prepare an approach on how you will deal with this aspect of the discussion. Put some thought into how you will address the completion of the ‘Learning and Growth’ section of the Action Plan and how the Performance and Development Index (Appendix 3) may be used as a developmental tool.
- **Reflect on what development opportunities** may be contained in the service plan that would benefit the individual, e.g. special projects, job rotation and new developments
- **Consider the skill mix** of those reporting to you and decide who might be best suited to progress specific pieces of work e.g. have any members of staff expressed interest in gaining experience in certain work areas? Are some people better suited to some tasks than others, based on their skills and experience?
- **Try and understand what types of work are particularly appealing** to the individual and where they invest the greater part of their energy. Don’t be afraid to seek the opinions of your direct reports to see how things can be improved for the following period; they may well have a different/fresh perspective from their role/vantage point in the organisation.

3.2 Participating in the Performance and Personal Development Planning Meeting

You may find it useful to consider the following:

- **Set the scene**
- Provide an **overview of how the unit or department has done overall** in the last period - what went well, and not so well
- Discuss the completed section 1.2 in the PRC form
- What are the **priorities and challenges are for the coming year** (ref the Service Plan).
- **Discuss the performance management process** and how both of you will meet your responsibilities contained in the process
- Discuss the **importance and validity of ongoing two way feedback** and agree to have (potentially) unpleasant conversations if situation demands it
- You may find it useful to have a discussion with the individual to **identify what motivates them in their role, what they particularly like about their job and what aspects they dislike or find particularly challenging**. This will give you a more rounded picture of the person, their ambitions, anxieties or concerns. This will provide a useful backdrop/context against which to review their performance and will also give you information in relation to future work, development opportunities and developmental requirements.
- **Discuss the individual's role** in the context of the service plan, the purpose of the role and priorities for the coming period, in advance of section 1.3 of the PRC being completed
- **Agree and discuss** these with the individual in more detail; agree the specific objectives, performance standards, timescales, budget and other resources available, any potential obstacles and how they might be overcome
- Classify these objectives for entry into the relevant sections of the **Action Plan**
- **Discuss the developmental activities** for the coming year in advance of section 1.5 being completed

It is important that the individual is absolutely clear as to the performance standards expected of him/her – otherwise it will be difficult to determine if the person is meeting those standards when it comes to review. The objectives selected should reflect a mix of

personal effort and input as well as personal performance measures and performance standards.

Objectives and performance outcomes need to be realistic and achievable but at the same time they should be challenging and serve to raise the standard of service provided. See Objective Setting in Appendix 4.

3.3 Preparation for the Mid-Cycle Review Meeting (Meeting 2)

In preparation for this meeting you should reflect on the objectives agreed with the individual at Meeting 1 and consider the points listed below:

- review the completed sections 2.1 and 2.2 of the PRC form in respect of each person reporting to you
- the status of objectives (complete, on target, delayed)
- any change in priorities or resources
- barriers to progress (if applicable)
- timescales (pending, cancelled or otherwise revised)
- any risks to achieving/not achieving the objectives
- resources used and/or required
- training and development or other support needs

There should be no surprises for manager or individual at this meeting if the liaison and feedback channels were open between them post Meeting 1.

3.4 Participating in the Mid-Cycle Review (Meeting 2)

It might be appropriate to open this meeting with a quick update on organisation/unit/team priorities/changes in priority since you last met.

Continue with a review of progress made in the last period, the individual's self assessment, and discuss and agree actions to address any issues arising/agree approach to dealing with new priorities/challenges that have arisen since. The individual can amend their Action Plan to reflect any changes agreed. Review status of any training and development/supports that the person is engaging with and the progress being made. It is good practice to acknowledge any specific positive changes you observed in the individual's performance since you last met. Similarly, if there are gaps in

performance, then this should be discussed and an approach to addressing that should be agreed. Complete section 2.3 of the PRC form.

3.5 Preparing for the Cycle End Performance Review & Developmental Evaluation (Meeting 3)

This end of cycle meeting is an opportunity for the individual to formally review and summarise their achievements and development over the previous cycle with their manager. As we know, performance reviews are most productive when they are a collaborative process, both parties have prepared for the meeting and there have been ongoing performance discussions and dialogue during the year. *There should be 'no surprises' for an individual at this review* – any issues that arose should have been addressed as they happen during the year.

Preparation:

- Agree well in advance the date, time and venue for the meeting
- Prepare for a focused discussion by agreeing the agenda for the meeting
- Decide on the structure and what points you would like to cover during the meeting
- Review of the staff members self assessment and feedback, section 3.1 of the PRC
- Your views and feedback and possible next steps

Be familiar with the documentation that you need to use in support of the performance management process and ensure you complete any documentation required of you as line manager.

3.6 Participating in the Cycle End Performance Review & Developmental Evaluation (Meeting 3)

This is the formal review of the employee's achievements and development over the period under review. The individual should be encouraged to discuss those aspects of their work that worked particularly well and the manager should encourage him/her to reflect on what enabled the successful outcome. It is important to find out about what things are working and why, so that the individual/the organisation can do more of it. Of course, any areas of underperformance should also be addressed but it is important that the feedback is evidence-based and that steps are agreed to bridge the performance gap(s). (See Chapter 6 Feedback and Engagement)

You may find it useful to consider the following:

- **Agree the agenda** and work through the structure of the meeting as you had prepared
- It is important to **acknowledge** when staff have put in extra effort and/or have exceeded what was expected of them
- If an individual has performed particularly well over the last period it is important to acknowledge this¹.
- When **discussing the individual's performance** over the last period its best to talk about specific situations/outcomes rather than speaking generally. This is especially the case of the person has underperformed.
- If you can **site specific examples** of good performance or underperformance, and the impact of that, it will be more meaningful to the individual and lead to a more constructive conversation
- You may wish to **explore in more detail the reason for the good performance or underperformance** e.g. was it to do with the skill/ability of the individual, their knowledge of the job, their motivation/interest in the job, their confidence levels or were there extraneous factors contributing to the underperformance
- It is **important that the individual understands** when and where they achieved or underperformed and the impact of that on the task at hand/team/unit/wider organisational objectives
- Complete section 3.2 of the PRC form

For those performing well in their role you may wish to reward with them further opportunities for them to '**stretch and grow**' e.g. they may be interested/motivated by working on a new project/job rotation/leading a new team/be given new responsibilities etc. It is important, where possible, that people have ownership and involvement in defining and planning their stretch objectives.

What may be useful to discuss at the review meeting is the person's actions/capability to address the issues identified, review patterns of performance/underperformance etc. Remember there is not much to be gained by focusing totally on the past – the emphasis should be on discussing standards to be attained in the future and how the individual can best meet those standards.

¹ Emphasising performance strengths drives 36.4% improvement in performance, almost 60% higher than performance weakness, which can cause a 26.8% decline in employee performance. Source: Corporate Leadership Council 2002 Performance Management Survey: HR Executive Forum Research.

You may wish to seek feedback from your direct report on their perception of your management style with a view to identifying if you can work towards enhancing the communication/working relationship with the individual going forward.

At the end of the meeting:

- Agree a summary of the main points discussed and the actions agreed
- Establish the immediate next steps
- Agree the time and date of the any follow up activities

If it is a case that an individual is found to be continuously underperforming, despite having received additional support/development, then they may be required to participate in a **Performance Improvement Process (PIP)**. You should consider the use of a Performance Improvement Plan when acknowledged underperformance is not being resolved through normal feedback. There is more on this in Chapter 7.