**Background**

The framework is designed to facilitate discussions between the employee and their manager (or whoever they report to). It is a guide to help constructively challenge each other to solve problems and improve the systems we all work within. Ideally it is to be used for all staff in their one to ones (status meetings) and team meetings.

Currently there is no agreed format for holding one to ones or team meetings and there is an inconsistent approach across the organisation. This inconsistency has led to some people having regular meetings with whom they report to whilst others have minimal contact.

This framework has been developed at the request of Corporate Management Team to promote a more consistent approach to communications between teams and their Manager[[1]](#footnote-1). Regular meetings are now required to be carried out between managers and their teams using this framework to guide how the discussions are carried out. All staff should receive regular one to one meetings. The frequency of the meetings should be decided to fit with the services business requirements and individual needs e.g. weekly, monthly, bi-monthly etc. It is suggested that the meetings are carried out to a regular schedule to ensure communication between teams is as consistent as possible.

**Our Approach**

The framework has been primarily designed for use in an environment which has undergone an intervention (Systems Thinking Review) where the service is thinking differently about its work and customers. However, using the framework will still be beneficial in an area that has not yet undertaken an intervention. The framework is designed to help people to have better conversations, to constructively challenge and to support service improvement.

The focus of the framework is to move away from just managing the people to managing the system. The system being the environment we work within and the network of functions that support and rely on each other through certain processes and activities. However, the framework does not solely focus on the system. The individual’s needs, wellbeing and personal welfare remain vitally important and is an essential part of a status meeting discussion. If the system is improved, it is hoped that the person’s wellbeing, in relation to work, will naturally do so as well.

In order to implement the framework, initially consider how often you will hold status meetings within your team. You may already hold them regularly at a mutually convenient time and will therefore use this framework during those meetings. Alternatively begin with once a month and alter as necessary as time goes on but ensuring they are still regular.

The purpose of this framework is to enable us to **“support, mentor and challenge each other to improve the system by surfacing and fixing problems**”.

The use of the following principles will also help to ensure maximum benefits for all:-

* Be open and honest, candid and open to challenge
* Identify and work together on system conditions (barriers/problems)
* Spend time truly analysing and understanding the difficult issues and work to address them and not leave them unanswered
* Ensure that issues or items are backed up by data
* Base decisions on fact and data
* Set aside sufficient undivided time and make good use of it
* Operate in a coaching[[2]](#footnote-2) manner
* Status meetings should take place in the appropriate place (e.g. in the work).
* Notes are taken in terms of actions and discussed at next one to one as necessary.

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At the core is setting the right perspective (i.e. foundation is in systems thinking) e.g. outside in perspective (from the service users perspective), learning ethos, focus on managing the system with decisions being made using facts and data.

**Understand** – The manager should enquire about their team member’s personal welfare, listen, ask open questions and hear what they are saying as opposed to waiting to speak themselves or finishing others sentences. Ask questions and use measures and data to underpin views and opinions. The manager should spend time in the work to experience what truly happens.

**Reflect** – Once colleagues have shared their thoughts, the manager should summarise and reflect back what has been heard to clarify understanding. Ensure both parties have a clear understanding of any issues.

**Act** – Work together to solve problems, coach the team member (encourage them to solve issues themselves), support trials for different ways of working; approach other sections over relevant system conditions that impact on your service etc. Agree how to move forward, summarise what has been agreed.

**Challenge** - During discussions, explore each other’s perspectives, options etc. by using questions with positive connotations e.g. “I can see that XXX is important to you, perhaps I can understand more if you tell me why XXX is so important “. Use some softer skills (listen, reflect, reframe). The intention is to improve the system while at the same time mentoring and encouraging individuals.

Taking some form of notes will be beneficial; some areas currently use duplication pads for ease, so both parties have the same notes of agreed actions and subjects covered to pick up at the next meeting. However there are no specific rules as long as actions are captured and revisited at the next one to one.

Examples of questions that can be used by a manager to encourage discussions:

* What’s going on in your world that you want to talk about?
* So what you mean is ……….. ?
* How can I help you with?
* So what, why does this matter?
* What are you struggling with?
* What’s stopping you?
* What do you think?

Initially this approach may take longer than any existing status meetings that you have had and may require more preparation than usual i.e. obtaining data to support views and opinions.

Trials using this method, have shown that it can take a while (depending on regularity of meetings) to establish a comfortable routine and relationship between participants. Feedback suggests, however, that improvements are generally visible in the demeanour and focus of the team much earlier than any tangible results are seen within the system itself.

For the person receiving the one to one, the following diagram may help to explain the approach:-

Mutually suitable place for discussion

My Stuff

Manager’s stuff

Learn by reflection

Learn by doing

Did you meet each other’s needs?

1. **Mutually suitable place for discussion** – off site location / in the work. Ideally you need to be able to speak freely with no interruptions. Total focus on the status meeting is the desired result.
2. **My stuff** – own wellbeing, development needs, daily issues, barriers to doing a good job (system conditions), what has been happening/been done since the last discussion.
3. **Manager’s stuff** – asks about wellbeing, refer to last status meeting, what has been happening/been done since the last discussion, reflect etc. Share information from CMT or DMT, explore new pieces of work, discuss time you have spent “in the work” – what you have seen
4. **Learn by reflection** – reflect back during conversations and after the meeting. Did you meet each other’s needs? Did you discuss everything you wanted to? Was it helpful?
5. **Learn by doing** – go find out, collect data, do things differently, grasp nettles to fix things, aim to continually improve the system as well as individuals.

**Use of Measures**

A set of measures will be developed in order to understand how useful the framework and its implementation has been. The measures will tell us what the current performance is and over time if this improves or declines. Some of the measures we will use are:

* Are status meetings taking place?
* How often?
* Individual feedback – positive/negative (managers & team members)
* Scenarios / case studies
* Training needs/skills needs

**Use of Measures over time**

In terms of a longer view, it would be hoped to see the following changes:-

* Improved Staff Survey results
* Improved sickness levels
* Reduced number of grievance/disciplinary issues
* Reduced staff turnover

**Annual Appraisal**

The Corporate Management Team have listened to the feedback from managers and colleagues and have agreed that annual appraisals between managers and their teams will be included as part of the System Performance Framework. The main purpose of the appraisal is to give the appraisee and their manager/team leader an opportunity to discuss and reflect on the work, general performance and development.

The appraisal should be a positive meaningful round up discussion, reflecting back over the last year, using information from previous one to ones and looking forward to the coming year’s challenges and new developments. When looking ahead links should also be made to the relevant Council Plan priorities with related actions or projects being discussed. Appraisals should be approached with a positive state-of-mind, with both participants listening and inputting to the process, building on the previous twelve months to determine the next.

The appraisal meeting can be an additional one to the regular one-to-one meetings. It is understood that one size does not fit all so the appraisal template has been designed to be flexible and to be used to meet the needs of both the service and the officers.

The template provided should be used to guide the discussion and to capture notes during the appraisal process. The annual appraisal must take place once a year with notes taken and shared between the apraisee and their manager/team leader. There is a requirement for the manager to confirm the appraisal has taken place using the HR21 system.

**Skills Matrix**

The framework and the appraisal process will be supported by a skills matrix which will enable managers to understand skills, development need and roles within their service/ area.

The Skills Matrix will provide managers with a tool to explore the generic skills required to carry out individual roles, and to then profile individuals’ skills against the profile for the role. A comparison of the two profiles will then show where members of staff have development needs or have skills which we are not currently utilising. This will then form the basis of individual, team and corporate training and development programmes. The profiles will also provide information which can be used for succession and workforce planning across the two councils.

The intention is to roll the Skills Matrix out alongside the Systems Performance Framework as the two complement and support one another as tools for improvement and performance management. Guidance notes will be provided for both mangers and staff to support the roll-out.

**Annual Appraisal Form**

Manager**[[3]](#endnote-1)** Name:

Apraisee Name: Date:

**In the last twelve months, what worked well, why & how do you know?**

|  |
| --- |
| E.g. achievements, projects, measures / information, performance, relationships, wellbeing etc. (Personal – optional)  |

**Looking ahead:**

|  |
| --- |
| E.g. key activities, priorities, training, development, skills, aspirations. (Personal – optional)  |

**Issues to fix:**

|  |
| --- |
| E.g. Worries or concerns - corporate / service specific (personal – optional) |

**Actions to move forward:**

|  |
| --- |
| E.g. Fix barriers, development / use measures. |

Once the appraisal has been carried out the manager should record the date it was completed on the HR21 system.

1. Manager – refers to an individual’s direct reporting line. Could be Team Leader / Supervisor etc.

V9 approved Jan 17 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Coaching: A form of development in which a coach supports a learner achieve a specific goal. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Manager – refers to an individual’s direct reporting line. This could be Team Leader / supervisor etc. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)