



1. Introduction

Homemaker recognises that in order to enable staff to perform their jobs effectively and efficiently, and to ensure that the highest standards are met, it is essential that clear objectives are agreed and monitored for all who work in the organisation. Employees must have access to good levels of support and review meetings, backed up by formal Performance Review. This policy sets out its expectations of managers and staff in a way that allows two-way communication and ensures that both are working towards organisational goals.

All staff and managers will be expected to adhere to the requirements of this policy. Specific arrangements for the Director are included at the end of the document.

The organisation will ensure that managers can demonstrate competence in the skills of Review Meetings and Performance Review.

2. Levels of support and accountability

- i. When a newly-appointed member of staff commences work, he or she will inevitably require a higher level of Review Meetings than normal, which will be offered in conjunction with an agreed induction programme, and which will continue throughout the probationary period. A pro-forma for interim and final probationary reviews is attached.
- ii. During the normal course of work, staff will need to seek advice and information from their manager, and this should be provided on a day-to-day basis, as and when required. They are also likely to consult with other individuals and colleagues outside of the management chain.
- iii. Individual Review Meetings sessions, as described in this policy, will enable both the manager and the staff member to focus on all aspects of the employee's work from each perspective, in a confidential and supportive setting.
- iv. The annual Staff Performance Review Scheme will build on discussions and agreements made during Review Meetings sessions, and set annual objectives
- v. Any serious issues of a disciplinary nature identified at any time, whether relating to conduct or capability should be dealt with under the provisions of the organisation's Disciplinary Procedures.

3. The purpose of Probation, Review Meetings, and the Performance Review

Probation is an identified period during which a new employee is given the opportunity to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and suitability for the post to which they were appointed. They will be given as much support and training as is necessary to enable them to carry out their role effectively.

Review Meetings help to ensure that practice and service standards reach, and are maintained at a high level. It also provides an opportunity to raise any issues or concerns, to review progress, and to identify any training needs.

General issues arising out of individual Review Meetings sessions may well be discussed in a group setting, such as staff meetings, where these would contribute positively to the development of practice and services overall, provided that no personal matters are raised which would compromise any particular members of staff.

Performance Review is an opportunity to look back systematically over past performance, and also set out work objectives, training and support for the next year. It is concerned with direction, achievement, recognition, involvement, job satisfaction and accountability. It is intended to help the employee's development and motivation and help her/him meet the demands of their job.

4. Equal opportunities and diversity

All processes are designed to take account of equal opportunities and ensure that skills and development needs are assessed, recorded and supported.

5. Confidentiality

Notes of all sessions will be made in writing.

Review Meeting notes will be kept confidential in a file especially established for the purpose.

Any learning gained by individuals that could usefully be shared with other team members, should be raised, with their agreement, at a staff/team meeting.

Performance Review forms will be kept confidential in the individual's review file.

Details of any sessions will be shared with the manager's manager to provide evidence of effective Review Meetings, management and Performance Review. Where there are any concerns about possible disciplinary issues, the provisions of the formal Disciplinary Procedure will be followed. (see Disciplinary and Grievance procedures)

6. Audit

In order to ensure that this policy is being operated appropriately, and to check that the principles are being upheld, the Board will from time to time ask to see copies of probationary reviews, Review Meetings notes or Performance Review forms. This will be done with appropriate notice.

7. Probation

The probationary period is normally six months. During this time a new employee will be given access to regular Review Meetings, support and training, which is aimed at enabling the staff member to carry out their role effectively.

At the end of the first three months, a formal interim review will be undertaken by the line manager to determine their progress, which will be recorded on the attached pro forma. Any concerns will be clearly highlighted and targets for improvement agreed. Where it is apparent that the required level of competence is not being achieved, the member of staff must be advised of the possibility that their probationary period may not be completed satisfactorily, and they may not be confirmed in post.

A final review will be carried out before the end of the six-month period, at which time a decision will be made about the suitability or otherwise of the new staff member. Where the appointment is to be confirmed, a letter to this effect will be sent by the Chair of the Board.

Where it is clear that the staff member is not able to fulfil the requirements of their post despite intensive support and training, and such concerns have been discussed and recorded, they will normally be given a week's notice of dismissal. However, where there are still concerns about the employee's suitability, but it is felt that further time may bring about an improvement, they may, in exceptional circumstances, be given an extended period of probation, which should not exceed a further three months. It must be emphasised that unless the required progress is made during this period, notice of dismissal will be given.

At the end of this extended period, a final decision must be made, which will either be to make the appointment permanent, or to dismiss.

8. The main elements of the Review process

There are three main elements: direction, development and support, details of which are outlined below.

Direction includes

- Helping the member of staff to understand and contribute to the organisation's major aims and objectives, how these are interpreted in the business plan, and how these impact on individual workloads;
- Being clear about expectations of staff;
- Managing workloads
- Sharing information on workloads and cases;
- Reviewing objectives on an ongoing basis;
- Checking and monitoring standards of work;
- Relaying information on practice and service delivery changes or developments
- Offering guidance on good practice techniques and methods.

Development includes

- Identifying training and development needs;
- Agreeing ways in which these will be met;
- Evaluating the learning gained and the impact on the job;
- Providing an opportunity to discuss and reflect on practice;
- Giving feedback on performance;
- Assessing and discussing any ongoing qualification training.

Support includes

- Offering personal support as appropriate;
- Providing professional support;
- Enabling access to clear and up-to-date information;
- Providing opportunities to challenge poor practice and seek constructive improvement;
- Providing opportunities to identify stress/risk factors to the worker and the means of dealing with them.

9. Frequency of Review Meetings

Review Meetings sessions will normally be held every 4 to 6 weeks for a maximum of two hours. A minimum of 10 sessions must be held each year. Dates and times should be agreed in advance, and it may be helpful to diarise the sessions at the beginning of each year. They should be held in a private, quiet room where disturbances are unlikely. Both parties will commit to keeping to the agreed times except in exceptional circumstances. A note must be made in the file of any cancelled sessions.

10. Format/recording of Review Meetings sessions

Managers will assess individuals' contributions regularly throughout the year at Review Meetings; taking into account what individuals are doing, the outcomes they are achieving and how they are working. The three core areas considered are:

- **Day job 'givens'**
How an individual has used skills specific to their role to deliver outcomes that benefit the team and the wider business e.g. delivery of a business as usual work programme that they have done before. This also covers performance against 'business givens'.
- **Achievement against objectives**
 - How an individual has applied their expertise/skills and knowledge to achieve stretching objectives that help improve their own capability and that of the organisation.
 - How this has made a difference in terms of the outcomes they've been able to deliver.
- **How we do things**
 - How an individual has brought to life and developed Homemaker's 'how we do things' statement in their role.
 - How this has made a difference in terms of outcomes and personal impact.

11. Personal issues

Managers need to be able to address with their staff the emotional impact of their work. Although it is not the manager's role to explore personal matters, or to act as a counsellor, it *is* appropriate that they are told about any personal difficulties which may affect the way in which the member of staff is able to carry out his/her work.

12. Disagreements

There may be instances where the manager and the member of staff are not able to resolve a particular issue. Such disagreements must be recorded in the Review Meetings notes, and both the manager and the member of staff should be able to discuss the matter in confidence with the Deputy/Director, who will make a decision about the most appropriate course of action.

When conflict arises which cannot be resolved, the manager or the member of staff may raise the concern with the Deputy/Director, within 10 working days of the review meeting.

Similarly, if individuals do not receive Review Meetings they should discuss this with their line manager. If the situation remains unresolved for more than 10 working days, they should refer this to the Deputy/Director.

13. The Performance Review

The performance year starts in September and ends on 31st August. However, managing performance is a continuous cycle, where for part of the year activities relating to the current and previous year's performance overlap.

Managers are responsible for setting consistent standards within their teams. They should work with their manager and peers to agree these standards and to benchmark what 'good' looks like.

At the start of the year, conversations should focus on performance expectations; the stretch needed to deliver priorities for the coming year; and what success will look like. Managers are likely to consider:

- Homemaker's priorities
- Organisational resilience
- The customer experience we need to deliver ('how we do things').

These discussions will feed into the conversations managers have with staff about their objectives and the contribution expected of them. Towards the end of the year conversations will shift focus to:

- How individuals have performed to date, against the expectations set at the beginning of the performance year
- How this compares to peers in the same or similar roles.

These discussions will inform the indicative performance decisions.

i) Objectives

The objectives that are discussed, and subsequently agreed, should help with year-on-year improvement and should therefore stretch and challenge the individual. For example they might focus on:

- areas for further development, which could be skills, knowledge and/or behaviour-related development
- supporting others in taking next steps
- Taking thinking, or working relationships, to a different level.

Some of these discussions will be about what is expected in terms of day job 'givens'. Performance against these will be assessed and taken into account when overall contribution is being considered. This means that they shouldn't need to find their way into objectives unless for example:

- something is changing such as ways of working, customer face/relationships
- a problem has been identified that needs to be resolved
- Performance is below the standard expected and improvement is required.

Ongoing development is a key reason for having objectives and success measures are likely to reflect some of the learning that will take place during the year. Other development actions should be recorded separately in the individual performance plan, but should clearly link to delivering the current role or support career aspirations.

ii) Performance decisions

Part of a manager's role is to use their discretion to reach an objective judgement on each staff member's overall contribution throughout the year.

Performance decisions are recorded using one of 3 descriptors:

- **Achieved objectives** – this represents a consistently 'good' standard of performance and is where the majority of people will be assessed. Remember 'good' is a stretching standard and the higher up a pay grade someone is the more we expect them to contribute to demonstrate it.
- **Exceeded Objectives** – this represents 'excellent' performance.
- **Not achieved objectives** – confirms that the individual must improve.

iii) Requirements

The following principles underpin the scheme

- Performance Review is a joint process between employee and manager
- The attached pro-forma must be used in carrying out the Individual Performance Plan;
- The process is straightforward and minimises subjective assessment;
- The scheme is designed to promote learning by reviewing past performance and looking ahead to set achievable objectives;
- Performance Review is part of a wider continuous process of management, review meetings and development;
- It will be used as a way to identify training and development needs;
- All Performance Reviews will be seen by and countersigned by the relevant manager's manager.

iv) Process

- The agreed objectives will be recorded, and used in subsequent Review Meetings sessions.
- A copy of the completed form will be kept on the member of staff's Review file.

14. Review

Once performance decisions have been formally communicated, employees have the right of appeal. Appeals must be emailed to the 'grandparent' manager (line manager's manager), detailing why the decision reached is unfair and should include any supporting evidence. A copy should also be sent to the line manager so they can prepare for the meeting.

Appeals will normally be heard in a face to face meeting, which should include the line manager who made the decision.

The outcome of the appeal will be communicated in writing.

This will conclude the appeals process. There is no further right of appeal.

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15. Specific arrangements for the Director

Although the provisions of this policy apply equally to the Director, the application of the procedures must be adapted as follows:

- i) The chair of the board will carry out Review Meetings in the same manner as set out in the policy.
- ii) An annual Performance Review will be conducted by member of the board appointed to do so (The Reviewer), following the provisions of the policy.
- iii) The Reviewer will have access to the documents created during the Performance Review process.

- iv) Following the annual Performance Review, the Reviewer will pass to the Chair of the Board the Performance Review form so that they have information about the objectives set in the Performance Review process.
- v) The chair of the board will be required to provide a report to the Reviewer six months after the Performance Review to report on the director's progress towards achieving the agreed objectives, and on any other issues which may have been identified which the chair feels the board should be aware of. A copy of this report will be shown to the director before it is passed to the Reviewer for comment.
- vi) A similar report will be produced prior to the annual Performance Review.

Date policy last reviewed and approved: January 2016

Date of next review: January 2017



THREE-MONTH PROBATIONARY REVIEW FORM

Name of staff member:

Position:

Date started:

Manager:

Date of this probationary review:

Achievements and strengths demonstrated to date

(covering areas such as contribution, commitment, skills, working relationships with colleagues, clients and other agencies, administration and personal effectiveness)

Areas requiring improvement

Overall assessment

Action plan**Training needs identified****Date of next probationary review:****Manager's decision**

I have discussed and agreed with the employee those areas requiring further improvement before confirmation in post can be considered.

Signed

Manager

Date

Acknowledgement of new member of staff

I understand and accept the contents of this report.

Signed

Date



SIX-MONTH PROBATIONARY REVIEW FORM

Name of staff member:

Position:

Date started:

Manager:

Date of this probationary review:

Date of last review:

Achievements and strengths demonstrated to date

(covering areas such as contribution, commitment, skills, working relationships with colleagues, clients and other agencies, administration and personal effectiveness)

Progress on areas requiring improvement identified at previous review

Overall assessment

Action plan**Training needs identified****Confirmation of suitability**

I believe that this member of staff is suitable/unsuitable for the post to which s/he has been appointed.

Action: Confirm/dismiss/extend probation

Signed

Manager

Date

Acknowledgement of new member of staff

I understand and accept the contents of this report.

Signed

Date



EXTENDED PROBATIONARY REVIEW FORM

Name of staff member:

Position:

Date started:

Manager:

Date of this probationary review:

Dates of previous reviews:

Achievements and strengths demonstrated to date

(covering areas such as contribution, commitment, skills, working relationships with colleagues, clients and other agencies, administration and personal effectiveness)

Progress on areas requiring improvement identified at previous reviews

Overall assessment

Action plan**Training needs identified****Confirmation of suitability**

I believe that this member of staff is suitable/unsuitable for the post to which s/he has been appointed.

Action: Confirm/dismiss

Signed

Manager

Date

Acknowledgement of new member of staff

I understand and accept the contents of this report.

Signed

Date

Homemaker South West

Performance Review Meeting

Name:
Job Title:
Date:

Performance against job 'Givens'	
Above expectation	Below expectation

How we do things	
Above expectation	Below expectation

Objectives	
Objective	Measure of success

Other discussion topics (ie: casework issues)

Homemaker South West

Individual Performance Plan Meeting:

This plan is between:

Name:

Job Title:

Line Manager:

Plan Start Date:

Plan End Date:

Your objectives

This guidance is aimed at managers and employees and is intended to clarify what is meant when we talk about a good quality individual performance plan.

Objective	Measures of success
<p>Employees are responsible for drafting their objectives based on discussions with their manager about what they should focus on.</p> <p>Objectives should help with year on year improvement. For example they might focus on areas for further development; creating/responding to change, supporting others in taking next steps or take thinking to a different level. Think about the discussions you've had in the previous performance year and build on these to start shaping what you should focus on next.</p> <p>Remember – objectives are not about doing the day job. This is a 'given'.</p> <p>Every employee must have a minimum of 3 stretching objectives, which are outcome-focused and individually tailored to them.</p> <p>When drafting objectives keeping asking 'so what'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- what difference will this make to what I deliver and the outcomes I'm able to achieve;- what difference will this make in terms of my personal impact? <p>Thinking about these questions should help shape and articulate the outcome.</p> <p>Also ask 'why is this important'? How does it link to the business plan, 'how we do things' or the capabilities you need to develop to do your job? They all contribute to Preventing Homelessness and Promoting Independence so if there isn't a link, is it a priority?</p>	<p>Success criteria clarify the what, how and when things are going to be done, and importantly how the manager and employee will know they have been done well.</p> <p>Remember that to bring something to life you need more than facts. The success criteria should act as a prompt and help the employee tell a story. To set the right tone for future discussions focus on achievements and accomplishments rather than tasks and activities.</p> <p>For example a task would be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 'to produce a draft <document> by <date>;- 'circulate to customer group for comment by <date>'. <p>To prove this had been done a copy of the <document> could be presented along with an email confirming circulation. This is hard evidence that does not stimulate discussion.</p> <p>An example of a success measure described as an achievement would be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 'able to describe how you have worked with colleagues and customer groups to produce a first draft <document>, which meets business needs, by <date>;- 'positive feedback from customer group leads <p>This approach necessitates a conversation. It also reinforces the message that requesting and seeking feedback should be the norm.</p>

Objective	Measures of success
<p>Managers should make sure that employees are clear about how performance against each objective will contribute to the achievement of the organisation's goals.</p> <p>There may be occasions, where a common issue has been identified, and a generic objective is appropriate. In this case, the success criteria should be individually tailored to reflect the different expectations of each person in the team.</p> <p>Managers will review draft objectives to make sure they have the right stretch and challenge before signing them off.</p> <p>Important – don't agonise over the wording; instead focus more on the success measures. These outline what things will look like if the objective is achieved.</p>	

Your development actions

Development actions
<p>All individuals need to stretch and grow with the job, the organisation and in line with any career aspirations they may have. This section isn't mandatory but if you don't record anything here ask yourself the questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If you're not developing yourself how are you keeping pace with change? - How are you ensuring that you continue to deliver a good level of overall contribution? - How are you ensuring that you consolidate, embed and share existing skills and knowledge?

Progress

Discussion notes and actions from your performance reviews.

Date of meeting	Discussion notes and actions
	<p>The quality of the conversation is what matters, and depending on what is being talked about, you should decide between you whether it would be useful to keep notes and how these should be recorded.</p>

Bringing “how we do things” to life

Our “How we do things” statements are essential to achieving the best for the clients we help.



We all need to understand the importance of ensuring “how we do things” is a reality in everything we do. For this reason, they underpin our approach to managing performance, and reinforce the message that ‘what you do’, and ‘how you do it’ are both important when it comes to being the best we can be.

We are professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ We always act with integrity, providing quality service, being reliable and responsible➤ We never talk about people behind their backs➤ We work flexibly in response to changing team requirements➤ We do not allow personal bias to affect working practice.➤ We arrive when we say we will➤ We maintain conduct in keeping with the interests and reputation of Homemaker Southwest
We develop people and benefit from diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ We provide training and development opportunities for staff➤ We are as diverse as the clients we help➤ Staff feel valued, respected and trusted➤ We support staff through change➤ We value staff for achievements and positively encourage improvements.
We support and trust each other to do the right thing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ We trust and support each other to perform to the best of our ability➤ We invest in the personal development of our staff➤ We do not upset one another intentionally and apologise quickly if we do➤ We always endeavour to present negative feedback constructively➤ We always treat each other with respect
We are focused on the needs of our clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ We try to achieve the best outcomes for our clients➤ We provide the advice people need for the problems they face➤ We ensure individuals do not suffer from a lack of knowledge about their rights and responsibilities➤ We empower our clients and do not disempower them➤ We understand our clients' situations, and prepare for all meetings with them
We take ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ We take ownership of our clients' needs and are accountable for all our work.➤ We will always act in the interests of our clients, with regard to the law➤ We understand the impact of our own behaviour on others, and are willing to adapt where necessary.➤ We show respect and sensitivity to clients, treating them as individuals➤ We take pride and ownership in all that we do and say.

HOMEMAKER SOUTHWEST: CASEWORKER JOB 'GIVENS'

Job Title: Caseworker

Job purpose:

- To deliver a high quality service, in order to reduce indebtedness, sustain tenancies, prevent eviction wherever possible, and promote independence.

Role specific "givens"

- Agree appropriate strategies with clients; with reference to both individual need and commissioner's brief, enabling the client to do as much as possible for themselves
- Deliver outcomes with regard to needs and expectations of commissioners and clients
- Ensure that clients receive a prompt and professional service
- Set up and maintain accurate and up to date client case notes on AdvicePro
- Ensure clients are encouraged to feedback their views on the service they receive and take on any comments on ways we could improve the service
- Maintain agreed monitoring and outcome information for commissioning agencies and internal management purposes
- Where other needs are identified, signpost to other housing and/or support service

Homemaker "givens"

- Uphold the aims and principles of the organisation
- Comply with organisational, statutory and legislative requirements
- Promote the services of the organisation to local housing, justice, social welfare, government agencies and other stakeholders
- Keep up to date with legislation, case law, policies and procedures relating to the role, and attend appropriate training; including reading relevant publications
- Attend meetings, performance reviews and training as required by line manager
- Comply with all the organisation's published policies and procedures, paying particular attention to Health and Safety, Risk Management, Confidentiality, and Equal Opportunities
- Maintain positive regular contact with colleagues
- Maintain timesheet & ensure TOIL hours are kept within policy limits
- Submit accurate expenses claims within timescales
- Undertake other such duties as may be required to ensure the effective delivery and development of the service
- Discuss any concerns about any area of employment with line manager in the first instance.
- Present a professional image at all times especially when representing Homemaker