

## A quick reference guide to the appraisals process and having effective discussions

As we mark another year of staff continuing to work from home. It is important that we recognise that staff have spent the last year continuing to do the best they can continuing with business as usual whilst changing priorities in preparation to becoming an ICS, continuing to support the COVID-19 vaccination programme, and supporting our local partners/stakeholders in dealing with the NHS backlog of following the impact of the pandemic.

In what has been a continued period of crisis and rapidly changing priorities, it is an ideal time to recognise efforts, motivate and engage our staff by reflecting and celebrating achievements and successes in 2021/22 through our appraisal process.

In recognising all of the recent activities staff have been involved in, now more than ever it is important that managers take time to reflect on these activities and acknowledge the achievements during 2021-2022. Last year we returned as closely as possible to the usual appraisal process timeframes in that we asked managers and staff to have review discussions between May and June.

This year, we will be returning to our usual appraisal cycle and the key timescales will be as follows:

- **April-May 2022:** appraisal meeting – end-of-year review/setting objectives for the year ahead and identifying personal development needs
- **June 2021– August 2022:** ongoing review and conversations
- **September 2022-October-2022-Mid-Year Appraisal review**
- **November 2022 – March 2023 –** ongoing review and conversations
- **April - May 2023:** appraisal meeting - end-of-year review/setting objectives for the year ahead and identifying personal development needs

End of year appraisal discussions should focus on the following key areas:

1. Reflection on key activities, objectives, successes and achievements during 2021-2022 and successes and achievements during the vaccination programme and getting back to business as usual. We recognise that some staff have taken up secondment opportunities in new directorates and in some cases taken on new roles under a new line manager. In these situations we expect managers to liaise with the previous line manager to ensure they have captured the member of staffs' key achievement/successes prior to their current role that will facilitate a meaningful discussion with the member of staff.
2. Agree priorities/objectives for the short-medium term (Setting SMART objectives)
3. Identify personal development needs
4. Health and wellbeing support

### Recording appraisal discussions on the Workforce System

We would like to encourage all CCG staff and managers to use the appraisal module on the Workforce System for the 2022/2023 appraisal cycle to record conversations and objectives.

All appraisal conversations should be completed under the designated appraisal section of the [Workforce system](#). Managers are encouraged to utilise the full functionality by recording:

1. Review of progress of 2021/22 objectives - Managers have the option of entering this information directly into Workforce System or to upload a document summarising progress against 2021/22 (Objectives section).
2. Set objectives for new appraisal cycle – we encourage these objectives to be entered directly onto the Workforce System (Objectives section) alternatively, these can also be uploaded as a document into the system.
3. Personal Development Plan (PDP) for 2022/23 – we encourage the 2022/23 PDP to be entered directly onto Workforce System (PDP section). A document, with supporting evidence can be uploaded once PDP objectives have been completed.

The HR team are available to support staff and managers if they would like support with utilising the appraisal module on the Workforce System.

Support, guidance and templates on recording appraisals on the [Workforce System](#) are available under the 'Help and Guidance' section of the Appraisal dashboard, these can also be found under the [Appraisal pages](#) on the intranet.

### **Guidance on having effective appraisal conversations**

We are expecting managers and staff to have a meaningful discussion reflecting on key activities and achievements, successes and Health & Wellbeing support with objectives being agreed for the year ahead. As the majority of staff are continuing to work remotely, and we expect this to continue for the immediate future, it's important to ensure the appraisal conversation is a two-way discussion to provide staff with an opportunity to highlight their achievements. To be effective, it is essential that the appraisal process is jointly owned by each member of staff and their line manager. Equally allowing adequate time for preparation is also an essential part of the appraisal process.

#### **Reflecting on 2021-22**

It will be important to utilise this part of the review meeting to discuss key activities, successes and achievements during 2021-22, including those relating to the vaccination programme and preparation for the ICS. With current working arrangements, it's even more vital that a review feels like a conversation, with staff having the opportunity to highlight their achievements, successes and performance. Where staff reprioritised and juggled responsibilities and/or supported the vaccination programme, such adaptability and responsiveness should be recognised and discussed as part of the review. We recognise that some staff have taken up secondment opportunities in new directorates and in some cases taken on new roles under a new line manager. In these situations we expect managers to liaise with the previous line manager to ensure they have captured the member of staffs' key achievement/successes prior to their current role that will facilitate a meaningful discussion with the member of staff.

#### **Reviewing 2020/21 Objectives**

Following the pandemic, objectives that were set for staff during the last appraisal review period will have been a combination of short term/medium term and following delay to the ICS transition there may have been a change in priorities, in turn, other or additional priorities may have taken their place. Therefore, during this part of the conversation, it will be important to ensure any changing priorities and associated key achievements are recognised and discussed.

#### **Agree priorities/objectives for 2022/23**

Given slightly revised timescales in establishing an ICS organisation staff and managers are encouraged to set objectives/priorities and how they will be achieved with this in mind. Both managers and staff should

discuss and identify support, learning & development activities that may help meet the priorities/objectives. This part of the meeting is also an opportunity to discuss career aspirations and plans. It will be important to keep objectives under review and update/revise objectives to ensure that they remain reflective of priorities.

### **Personal Development Plan**

There should be a discussion on the learning and development needs that will be support the achievement of the objectives, continuous professional development and career planning. Learning needs can be achieved in a number of ways including development on the job; learning from others and formal learning opportunities.

### **Health and Wellbeing Support**

Remote working almost feels like the norm now. These continued working arrangements require a high level of accountability for staff to remain motivated and engaged. Working in these ways, worrying about our own health and wellbeing or that of family and friends and spending a lot of time in one place can all affect staff in different ways. It is therefore critical to look after our mental, physical and social wellbeing and therefore we encourage all staff and managers to continue to discuss health and wellbeing and the support that is available for all staff throughout the year. The CCG recognises the benefits for some staff working from home brings, but also the reduced face-face and social contact.

Simply asking ‘how are you?’ and allowing colleagues time to reflect and respond is a great way to start the conversation. Some colleagues may not feel comfortable talking about their personal health and we want to reassure staff that it is okay.

### **Remember**

- **No surprises** – Regular feedback should be provided throughout the year at informal ‘one-to-one’ meetings and the appraise should know broadly what issues are likely to arise at the appraisal. Appraisals are not the time to raise new issues of poor-performance or conduct that have not been discussed with staff before.
- **Proper scheduling** – Schedule enough time (generally at least one hour) for the meeting, and interruptions should be avoided.
- **Two-way interaction** – Make sure it’s a two-way process - neither the manager nor the member of staff should do all the talking. 70% Staff and 30% Manager
- **Be prepared** – Appraisal review meetings work best when managers and staff prepare carefully and in advance.

### **Further Guidance, Support and Information**

- Appraisal Policy -Further guidance on how to set SMART objectives and how to have effective and meaningful appraisal discussions can be found in the CCGs appraisal policy. The appraisal policy can be found on the intranet [here](#)
- Appraisal Guidance and templates can be found [here](#)
- Health and Wellbeing support – Guidance on holding health and wellbeing conversations is available [here](#) and information on wellbeing support is available on our [staff health and wellbeing intranet page](#).
- HR Drop in session: HR Drop in sessions have are being scheduled throughout April and May. Staff and managers can look out for these dates using the link [here](#)
- Bite Size learning sessions: Short 1 hour learning sessions are being scheduled. Dates will follow. Please look out for these in the weekly staff newsletter or HR pages on the intranet.
- HR Business Partnering Team - If you have any questions or would like any further information please contact a member of the HR Business Partnering Team:

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