# HR Guidance

## Appraisals & 1-2-1s

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Contents

[Introduction 3](#_Toc184023561)

[Scope 3](#_Toc184023562)

[Principles 3](#_Toc184023563)

[Process 3](#_Toc184023564)

[Scheduling Appraisals 4](#_Toc184023565)

[Topics for Appraisals 4](#_Toc184023566)

[Maximising Performance by Focusing on Strengths and Talents 5](#_Toc184023567)

[The Annual Appraisal and Feedback 5](#_Toc184023568)

[Setting Goals 6](#_Toc184023569)

[Accessing Support 6](#_Toc184023570)

[Reporting to SLT 7](#_Toc184023571)

[Appendix 1: The Annual Appraisal 8](#_Toc184023572)

[Scheduling the Appraisal Meeting 8](#_Toc184023573)

[Appraisal Meeting 9](#_Toc184023574)

[Recording Appraisal Information 9](#_Toc184023575)

# Introduction

Appraisals and 1-2-1sare conversations about performance, goals, development and wellbeing are essential to ensuring that people have the clarity, support and recognition needed to confidently deliver their role.

Having a consistent approach to 1-2-1s promotes regular and informal conversations which focus on strengths, wellbeing, performance and development. At the end of the year, an appraisal shall be carried out where employees and managers will agree development and objectives for the year ahead.

1-2-1s form part of the engagement, recognition and development culture within the workforce and both employees and managers are encouraged to seek feedback and discuss performance regularly both on an individual and group/team basis.

# Scope

This procedure applies to both corporate and operational employees of Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service.

# Principles

* Conversations about performance matters should take place regularly
* Managers, individuals and teams are expected to participate in the process. Anyone can initiate or arrange conversations about performance and are encouraged to do so.
* 1-2-1s should aim to be an empowering, supportive and helpful experience. Employees may request a 1-2-1 with their manager if they have something they need to raise.
* Conversations and feedback should focus on building and utilising an individual’s strengths and natural talents.
* Team members are encouraged to use their strengths to support everyone’s development.
* Objectives should balance the needs of the service and maximise the talents and development requirements of the individual.
* It is an opportunity for managers to go over the Core Code of Ethics with the employee and ensure they are consistently working with them in mind.
* Formal appraisals should take place annually and the whole period should be reviewed- not just recent or isolated events.
* Capability concerns should be addressed under the performance management procedure
* All employees are treated fairly and equally

# Process

The appraisal process is summarised below:

* Line managers schedule in opportunities to have regular informal 1-2-1s with the individuals and teams they manage.
* Line managers and employees discuss and identify the performance and development areas they will focus on throughout the year. These areas should be relevant to the individual and their contribution to the organisation.
* Throughout the year, 1-2-1 conversations take place covering the agreed topics as a minimum.
* At the end of the year, an appraisal takes place between the line manager and employee which summarises performance conversations and explores developments and goals for the year ahead.
* Appraisals can take place within existing meetings, such as 1-2-1’s, supervisions or alternatively separate meetings can be arranged.
* It is an opportunity for the employee to let their manager know of any new qualifications they have obtained since their last appraisal. These can be recorded on the employee’s file.
* It is also an opportunity for the employee to inform their manager of any potential disclosures that may be raised on their next Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
* Managers can use the appraisal opportunity to ask the employee if they have gained primary/secondary employment which the service is unaware of.
* Line managers and employees complete and agree the appraisal form.
* Line managers provide employees with a copy of the appraisal form and attach this to their HR record, ensuring the date of the appraisal has been recorded.
* Following the completion of all annual appraisals, managers collate the appraisal feedback and provide some collective feedback to their senior manager so the senior leadership team can be updated.

# Scheduling Appraisals

Throughout the year, managers should ensure there are appropriate opportunities to meet with employees in 1-2-1s and team / group environments.

Annually, managers should schedule in specific appraisals. These can take place within existing meetings such as 1-2-1’s and supervisions.

If throughout the year, individuals feel they would like additional opportunities to have 1-2-1 conversations, they are encouraged to raise this with their manager and / or arrange separate meetings.

Whilst regular 1-2-1s and team meetings should take place across the whole service, there is no “one-size-fits-all” guidance relating to the frequency and length. These should be arranged locally by the line manager to ensure they complement the services being delivered.

# Topics for Appraisals

Managers and employees should discuss and identify the performance and development topics they will focus on throughout the year. For example, they may wish to have separate sessions focusing on “customer”, “working together” and / or “communication and engagement” whilst others may wish to focus sessions on “leadership” and “managing resources”. They should aim to cover the areas that are particularly vital to the individual’s role, aspirations and contribution to the organisation and its objectives.

Appraisals should also reflect employee wellbeing and aim to identify the needs and aspirations of individuals along with the services they are delivering.

Given that performance conversations will happen regularly and informally, each appraisal should aim to cover just 1 or 2 topics. This allows the conversation to be focused on a particular performance area of importance. E.g. career goals, or leadership.

A successful appraisal would recognise an individual’s strengths, needs and successes and identify how areas of talent can be used effectively to enhance the performance of the service. This can be achieved by aligning goals against areas of natural talent, setting objectives and providing support and routes available to develop themselves and /or mentor others.

# Maximising Performance by Focusing on Strengths and Talents

All individuals have areas of natural strengths and weaknesses which are unique. Appraisals are based on a Strength-based-model which maximises performance by encouraging a focus on an individual’s natural talents, expertise and skills rather than any deficits or problem areas.

The tools available to support appraisals focus on an individual’s abilities. They help to explore how an individual’s strengths and natural talents can be best developed and used to deliver their services, teach, support others and maximise their performance and the performance of others.

Applying a strength-based approach is about recognising everyone’s strengths and understanding that everyone can both teach and learn from another. This approach ensures individuals feel valued, empowered and supported to work as a team and perform at their best.

When scheduling appraisals, managers should prioritise the discussions around the areas of natural strength within the individual or the team, with a focus on how they can use that strength to enhance the overall performance and contribution to the service.

# The Annual Appraisal and Feedback

On a rolling 12-month basis, employees and managers will meet to discuss their performance from the last 12 months under an appraisal.The purpose of the appraisal is to review the previous year and plan for the year ahead.

Appraisals should take place in an appropriate setting - ideally a meeting room which is private and free from interruption from others.

Before the appraisal meeting takes place, both managers and employees should take time to reflect on the individual’s contribution, including their achievements, strengths and development. They should summarise the individual’s overall performance and reflect this in the form.

At the appraisal, managers and employees will come together to review their summaries and agree any actions needed to support performance, personal and /or team development.

Managers and employees should complete the appraisal form and ensure they record that they have completed their appraisal on the HR System and upload their appraisal form. Employees should receive a copy of their completed appraisal form. More detail and guidance on appraisal can be found in Appendix 1.

# Setting Goals

As part of your ongoing 1-2-1 conversations and the annual appraisal, managers and individuals should consider setting goals. Goals will be more relevant in some circumstances and roles than others.

Goal setting requires outlining an action plan of things an individual should aspire to achieve over a forthcoming period. Goals should go beyond the immediate tasks required within the role. Goals should always support the delivery and/or advancement of services and be in keeping with the outcomes we want to achieve as a service.

Goals should help stretch and grow skills, enhance wellbeing and maximise the performance and delivery of services within teams. In setting the goals, employees and managers may wish to consider the following:

***Task Based Goals*** will outline specific work to be delivered, for example, a project that supports the team and service’s objectives.

***Skills and Development Goals*** will focus on skills and / or personal styles that can be developed to enhance the employee’s performance and career aspirations.

***Personal and Wellbeing Goals*** will explore stresses and focus on wellbeing and /or work-life balance actions that will support the employee *to perform at their best.*

Any goals set should be clear, realistic and achievable within the set timescale. They can be short-, medium- or long-term goals and should always be revisited regularly as part of ongoing 1-2-1s.

Task based goals would ideally be collectively shared within the team so there is support and clarity over roles and responsibilities.

# Accessing Support

During 1-2-1s and in setting goals, managers and employees should consider any dependencies or support needed to achieve the goal and how this support can be put in place. For example; training, mentoring, wellbeing, new systems / approaches etc.

Before 1-2-1s or appraisals take place, managers are advised to familiarise themselves with the support programmes available, and how to access these.

Guidance is available on the Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service website in the Wellbeing Hub:

<https://www.cumbriafire.gov.uk/cfrs-wellbeing-hub>

# Reporting to SLT

Managers should aim to complete all of their team’s appraisals within a rolling 12 months.

When all appraisals are completed it is important that managers reflect on the information that has been discussed and consider the collective feedback from the team. Managers should collate the information gained from carrying out appraisals throughout their teams to identify any emerging themes or development requirements relevant to the overall performance of the team. This information should be forwarded to their senior manager who will feed this information into their head of service area.

The Senior Leadership Team will collate and review the appraisal feedback annually to establish any emerging themes arising across their service area. These themes will be used to inform and agree any appropriate actions needed to support the workforce in their areas.

At a team level, managers should discuss any emerging themes arising that require some immediate action with their senior manager. For example, it may be apparent following all appraisals that there is a new training need, system improvement or resourcing requirement needed within the team.

# Appendix 1: The Annual Appraisal

The purpose of the appraisal is to discuss and capture a summary of the ongoing 1-2-1s between the employee and their line manager over the previous 12 months.

# Scheduling the Appraisal Meeting

**New Starters -** The probation process is designed to formally monitor and support performance and development within the role and therefore it is appropriate to allow that process to conclude before any new performance objectives are discussed. New corporate and operational employees will have their appraisal at the 26-week mark in line with the probation policy.

**Periods of absence/leave such as long-term sickness, maternity, adoption etc.** - If an employee is absent at a time when their 12-month appraisal is due to be undertaken, managers should arrange the appraisal to take place at an appropriate time following their return. Each case is different, but this would usually be undertaken within 3 months of their return. In cases where there has been a long period of absence, the focus of the appraisal will be more forward looking rather than a summary of past 1-2-1s.

**Internal Transfers -** employeesshould receive an appraisal every 12 months, even if they have changed roles within the last 12 months. In circumstances where employees change line management, a hand over discussion should take place between line managers to share relevant performance information around for example, strengths, development, personal goals etc.

**Dual Roles-**

* For employees that have more than one job within the service, but the same line manager, one appraisal meeting should cover both jobs. Line managers must ensure that both jobs are marked as having a completed appraisal on HR system.
* Where employees have more than one job and have **different** line managers, the following can apply:
  + 2 separate appraisals are conducted by each respective line manager or;
  + 1 appraisal meeting is conducted by both managers or;
  + In cases where employees have a main contract of employment and an additional contract on an ad hoc basis or substantially lesser hours, the appraisal meeting can be conducted by the “main” manager, with written contribution and feedback from the employee’s other line manager.
    - Whilst, the main manager undertakes the appraisal, **both** managers must ensure that the appraisal completion information is recorded on the HR system against both roles held by the individual.
* In circumstances where employees have one role, but more than one manager, appraisals can be undertaken by either one or both of their line managers.

# Appraisal Meeting

The appraisal will cover 5 key areas and the main points within the conversation should be captured on the appraisal form:

1. **Individual Summary and feedback**– employees should capture their achievements, strengths and performance. They can also provide any feedback to their manager, including any support they may need or concerns they may have.
2. **Manager Summary and feedback** – this provides the line manager with an opportunity to summarise the employee’s achievements, strengths, productivity and contribution to the team. Where applicable, they can also share and discuss any feedback gathered from the individual’s colleagues or customers.
3. **Wellbeing** – this provides the employee and manager with the opportunity to summarise any points relating to their resilience and wellbeing, particularly focusing on ensuring an appropriate level of work life balance. Individuals can discuss any changes in work they feel could be made to ensure they keep well and resilient.
4. **Personal Development and Career Aspirations**– this provides employees and managers with an opportunity to discuss their aspirations, personal development and how they can utilise their strengths to develop others. The employee and line manager can discuss and summarise any development requirements over the coming year and establish how these will be undertaken.
5. **Goals**- this provides employees and managers with an opportunity to focus on goals and work objectives. Goals can outline short-, medium- or long-term ambitions. Managers and employees should review and revisit these objectives regularly during their 1-2-1s throughout the year.

# Recording Appraisal Information

Following an appraisal meeting managers MUST record appraisal information on the appropriate HR system for their employee.